

No 41.

5 Cents.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

BOSS OF THE MARKET; OR, THE GREATEST BOY IN WALL STREET.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



If a bomb had suddenly exploded in the office a scene of greater consternation could not have ensued. The brokers, without an exception, made a mad rush for the door, almost tumbling over one another in their haste to get out.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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BOSS OF THE MARKET

OR,

The Greatest Boy in Wall Street

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES OUR HERO AND TWO OTHER IMPORTANT CHARACTERS.

"That's the smartest boy in Wall Street," remarked pretty Elsie Carter to Oakley Thorne, a sprucely-dressed young man of twenty, with an incipient mustache and the air of one who thought himself the whole thing.

Elsie was the stenographer for Baring & Co., stock brokers, Vanderpool building, Exchange Place, while Thorne was margin clerk for Bradford, Winberry & Co., whose offices were in Broadway.

They were standing at the corner of Exchange Place and Broad street when a bright, manly-looking and well-dressed boy passed by to whom Elsie bowed with a smile.

Thorne greatly admired Elsie, and sought every opportunity to cultivate her acquaintance, but the girl did not reciprocate the feeling.

A moment before, while on her way to lunch, she had met Oakley Thorne face to face, and he took advantage of the circumstance to stop her for a few minutes' conversation.

Oakley didn't relish Elsie's remark, and moreover was a bit jealous on account of the evident friendliness which the girl exhibited for the boy in question, who Thorne knew well and disliked for many reasons.

"Who says he is?" he retorted in an unpleasant tone.

"Well, I say so for one," replied Elsie, with a spirited laugh.

"You, Miss Carter!"

"My employer, Mr. Baring, thinks very highly of him, too. Besides I have heard a number of brokers speak in glowing terms of Sidney Grant."

"Indeed," replied Thorne, sneeringly. "He must be quite a phenomenon, then."

"He is a good boy, at any rate, and a perfect gentleman," said the girl, with a slight flush, as if she resented her companion's attitude toward the subject of their conversation. "He supports his widowed mother and his crippled sister on a messenger's salary, and such a boy is well worthy of any person's respect."

With these words and a slight bow the young lady attempted to pass on, but the margin clerk detained her.

"Wait a moment, Miss Carter," he said.

"You will have to excuse me, Mr. Thorne. I am in a hurry to go to my lunch."

"What's the matter with lunching with me. We can go right around to Drake's."

"No, thank you," she replied with a little laugh; "I prefer to lunch alone."

"But you might make an exception in my favor. I should esteem it an honor to be afforded the pleasure of your company. I patronize quite a tony restaurant."

"I am ever so much obliged for the invitation," replied the girl, in a tone of forced politeness, "but I prefer to go alone."

Oakley was not pleased with her refusal.

He had been maneuvering for a month to get her to go to lunch with him some day, as he was eager to show his friends who patronized a certain restaurant what a charming girl he had on the string, as he put it.

Elsie had no wish, however, to be seen in Oakley Thorne's society.

He wasn't the kind of man that the girl cared to be on familiar terms with.

She was almost angry with herself for pausing at all to exchange words with him as she had done.

So she hastily excused herself again and hurried on her way, leaving her admirer to mutter certain expressions of disappointment to himself that, had she heard them, would have jarred upon her delicate ears.

"She thinks a great deal too much of Sid Grant to suit me," he snarled, with an ugly frown. "Just as if that beggar amounted to anything. What is he anyway? Grigsby's messenger. I wonder where he gets the money to dress as he does and at the same time support a mother and invalid sister? Bah! He makes me sick!"

Having thus relieved his feelings, Thorne turned on his heel and proceeded to the swell restaurant on Beaver street, where he was accustomed to blow in seventy-five cents nearly every noon hour.

In the meantime Sidney Grant had dropped into another place himself, and finding all the stools occupied, and a crowd waiting to grab the first vacant one, he walked on to the tables, largely occupied by young ladies employed in the financial district.

Quite a number of young men were waiting in the aisles here for the chance of a seat, and Sid joined them.

First come first served is not necessarily a rule in a quick lunch place.

It's every one for himself, with the chances all in favor of the alert and active.

In fact, luck figures largely in the opportunity of catching a seat.

There were girl waiters to attend to your wants as soon as you found a place at one of the tables.

Sid was lucky on this occasion.

He hadn't stood half a minute before a girl got up alongside of him and he took her chair in a twinkling.

He called for beef stew, a cup of coffee and custard pie, and had barely commenced his meal before Elsie Carter came tripping in, and just as she was passing the table the gentleman opposite to Sid got up, with his check in his hand, and started for the pay counter.

Miss Carter took the seat and found herself face to face with Sid.

"We meet again, Miss Elsie," the boy smiled, as the girl favored him with one of her bright glances.

"It seems so, doesn't it?" she laughed.

Then a waitress came up and took her order.

"That was Mr. Thorne you were talking to as I passed, wasn't it?" Sid asked.

"Yes. He stopped me on the corner a moment before you came along. Do you know I don't like that man.

There are some people in this world that a person prefers not to meet. He's one of them from my standpoint."

"I hope I don't come in that category, Miss Elsie?" smiled Sid.

"The idea! Just as if you did! I am always pleased to meet you."

"Thank you. The pleasure is mutual."

"You say that very nice," laughed the girl, as the waitress came up with her order. "What do you suppose Mr. Thorne had the cheek to ask me?"

"I couldn't guess."

"He wanted me to lunch with him. Just as if I would do such a thing."

"Instead of which you are doing me the honor to lunch with me."

"It looks that way, doesn't it?"

"Almost. At least we are at the same table. This is the first time luck has played my way in that respect."

"Then I hope you appreciate it."

"I certainly do."

"May I ask how your mother and sister are?"

"They were all right when I left home this morning, thank you."

"It is too bad your sister is so afflicted," said Elsie, sympathetically.

"It is, indeed, Miss Elsie," replied Sid, soberly. "And she's the best little sister in the world, too."

"And you are a good brother to her, I know," flashing a look at Sid that set his blood all of a tingle, for if there was a girl he liked next to his sister Nellie that girl was Elsie Carter.

"I try to be. She can't go out like other girls unless some one is with her, either mother or I, and as mother is always pretty busy she has come to rely on me."

"Most boys prefer to take out some one else's sister," said Elsie, demurely.

"Perhaps that is natural," he replied, with a little smile; "but I'll never desert Nellie. I wouldn't have the heart to do that. She's so patient and cheerful, and she thinks the world of me. Why, I'd be a brute if I didn't do everything in my power to make her happy."

A tear glistened in Sid's eye.

Elsie saw it, and for an instant her own grew moist as she thought of the unfortunate cripple to whom her heart went out.

Then a look of respect and admiration for the loyal brother took its place.

Never before had she thought so much of Sid Grant as she did at that moment.

"Do you know, Miss Elsie, I do wish you'd let me take you up to our house and introduce you to my mother and sister. I've told Nellie about you, and she has often said she'd like to know you. She has very few, almost no girl friends. Those with whom she does occasionally get acquainted drop away soon because they don't find much amusement in associating with a cripple. Now I think you are different. You would like Nellie, I am sure, for

you have a sympathetic heart. And Nellie—I know she'd love you."

"You are very kind to invite me," replied Elsie. "I should be very glad to make your sister's acquaintance. I'm sure if she's like you I shall like her very——"

Elsie stopped, a bright blush suffusing her cheeks, for she suddenly became conscious that she was saying too much.

Sid's heart gave a jump, and the glance he gave her confused her still more; then he hastened to set her at her ease by remarking that he would be very happy to take her up on the ensuing Saturday afternoon if her mother was willing she should go.

"I think mother will offer no objection," replied Elsie. "However, I will ask her and let you know before Saturday."

That was quite satisfactory to Sid, and both having finished their lunch, got up from the table and left the restaurant together.

CHAPTER II.

A TIP WORTH A FORTUNE.

Sid worked as messenger for Samuel Grigsby, of No. — Wall street.

Grigsby was one of the big guns on the Street.

He had money to burn—indeed he was accounted many times a millionaire—and when he went into a deal there wasn't a broker almost but looked upon his operations with respect, for Grigsby was a mighty tough antagonist.

He had all the tricks of the business at his fingers' ends.

You couldn't fool Grigsby—not on your life.

You couldn't push him into a corner, for his resources appeared to be limitless.

What Grigsby didn't know about working a corner in a stock wasn't worth talking about.

He was regarded as the man behind every important bull movement on the market, though this wasn't really so.

Sid had picked up one or two tips on the outside during the three years he had been with Grigsby, and had used them in a small way to his own advantage, which accounted for the small account he had in a savings bank and the good clothes he managed to provide himself with.

Nothing less than a pretty sure thing would have brought his little capital into action, and sure things were not often given out in Wall Street.

Sid lived in Christopher street with his widowed mother and invalid sister, and he was as loyal to them as he was to his employer.

When Sid returned from lunch on the day we introduce him to the reader he hung his hat up, and taking his customary seat began to look over the columns of a Wall Street daily.

A little item away down at the foot of a lot of other

items of varied importance arrested his attention for a moment.

It was an unconfirmed rumor that the Lehigh Valley Coal & Iron Co. was negotiating for the control of the Pennsylvania Short Line Railway, an independent line connecting with the Reading system.

A similar rumor cropped up every few months, but nothing ever came of it.

Sid didn't give the item any particular attention, and a few minutes later Grigsby's bell rang and he went to see what his employer wanted.

"Take this letter down to the offices of the Lehigh Valley Coal & Iron Co., No. 1 Broadway. Deliver it to Mr. Root."

"Yes, sir," replied Sid, promptly.

He put on his hat and left the office.

"It's funny that I should be sent to the very company I was reading the item about a few minutes ago," he thought, as he crossed Wall street toward Broad.

He made good time to the Bowling Green Building and found that the company in question had a suite on the eighth floor, so he took the elevator and was presently let out at that floor.

The coal and iron company's rooms faced upon Broadway at the extreme end of the corridor.

A typewriter girl came forward from her table as Sid entered the reception-room.

"I wish to see Mr. Root," he said.

"Mr. Root is engaged at present. Please take a seat."

Sid, instead of sitting down, went over to the open window and looked out.

Presently the girl was called into an inner office and the boy was left alone.

In a moment or two Mr. Root and his visitor came out of the former's private office and stopped within a few feet of Sid.

"Then your control of the Pennsylvania Short Line is an accomplished fact at last, eh?" Sid heard the visitor say.

"Yes; but not a word, remember. It is a profound secret at present. The papers were only signed this morning, and it will be two or three days before we shall let the facts leak out. By that time we shall have gathered in all of the stock we can conveniently handle."

"The announcement of the deal will send Lehigh Valley stock booming."

"Undoubtedly. It has been steadily declining for some time, owing to the passing of our July dividend and the publication of adverse reports of the business done by the company during the first two quarters of this year."

"When do you think I'd better place an order for the stock?"

"Not before Thursday. It will probably be a point lower by that time. We shall not give the news to the press until about Friday noon, and the Exchange will get it by special messenger by that time. Buy as much of the stock as you can raise the money to pay for, and you are

sure to win a great many thousand dollars before this time next week."

"You can trust me doing that, George. I'm ever so much obliged to you for the tip. If at any time I can return the favor you may be sure I will."

"Don't mention it, Fred. All I ask of you is complete silence as to the facts I have confided to you. No one outside of yourself and the board of directors of this company must catch the slightest hint of our having secured complete control of the short line until we give the news out ourselves."

"It was a tiptop move to secure the short line, as you can use all the cars for your own product to the exclusion of the Yankee Doodle Coal Company. The result is inevitable. The Yankee Doodle property will fall into your clutches just like an over-ripe pear from the tree. When that time comes the Lehigh Valley stock will take another move upward."

Mr. Root nodded with a quiet little laugh, and rubbed his hands.

"We have got things about where we want them at last. From this time out the Lehigh Valley Coal & Iron Company's stock will take its place among the gilt-edged securities of the day."

"There is not the slightest doubt of that fact," replied the other, bowing himself out of the office.

Mr. Root, who was the secretary of the company, returned to his room without noticing the boy, who was standing at the window, and closed the door.

Sid had heard every word of this brief conversation, and his quick comprehension told him that he had, in a most remarkable manner, got hold of an invaluable tip.

"It's worth a raft of money to a man with capital, and here I've only got a measly little \$260 in the bank to operate with. It's too bad. I can't go to Mr. Grigsby with this information because the president and several of the directors of this company are regular customers of ours. There isn't the least doubt but that this note I have brought has some reference to instructions in regard to the purchase of Lehigh Valley stock for Mr. Root and other gentlemen on the inside. Well, I suppose a few crumbs are better than no bread at all. I'll put my whole capital up on a ten per cent. margin, and I ought to clear anywhere from \$10 to \$20 a share. I never wished for a fat wad so much in my life before, for tips like this one are as rare as rooster's eggs."

Sid left the window and knocked on Mr. Root's door.

"Come in," exclaimed a voice.

The young messenger opened the door and entered the room.

"Mr. Root?" he asked, inquiringly.

"That's my name," replied the secretary.

"I have brought a note from Mr. Grigsby."

"Take a seat," replied Mr. Root, holding out his hand for the envelope, which he immediately tore open and read.

He pondered a moment, then drew a pad toward him

and wrote a brief reply which he sealed up in one of the company's envelopes, addressed it to Mr. Grigsby and handed it to Sid.

The boy put the envelope carefully away in an inner pocket of his jacket and left the secretary's office.

The first thing he did when he reached his own office was to consult the market reports to see what Lehigh Valley Coal & Iron Co. was quoted at.

He found it was ruling at 25.

CHAPTER III.

SID GRANT PROVES HE IS AN HONEST BOY.

When Sid came home to supper that evening his sister Nellie noticed that he appeared to be in an unusually thoughtful frame of mind.

"What are you thinking about, Sid, dear?" asked the crippled girl, putting her arms around his neck in an affectionate manner, for he was seated beside her on the lounge.

"What would you give to know, Nellie?" he asked her, with a mischievous smile.

"Six kisses, if you will accept them," she replied, winsomely.

"I couldn't think of refusing such a bribe," he answered, drawing her to him as if she was his sweetheart; "so begin, and I'll check them off."

"I don't like you to talk that way about my kisses," she answered, poutingly.

"Don't you? Why, how can I tell whether I get full count unless I keep tab on them?" he chuckled.

"You ought to be willing to trust to my honesty," she replied, caressing his curly locks.

"All right. We'll let it go at that."

"Now, tell me what you were thinking of," she said, after she had given him the six kisses.

"I was thinking about the tip I got hold of to-day, and what a mint of money I could make out of it if I only had enough capital to go in with and win."

"A tip, Sid! Do tell me all about it," she asked, eagerly, for she had quite a little knowledge of stock matters herself, for her brother had made her wise to the business in which he was engaged.

Sid gratified her curiosity at once, telling her just how he had obtained the valuable pointer on the Lehigh Valley Coal & Iron Co.

"Wasn't you fortunate!" she cried, clapping her hands.

"Sure I was. Such things as that come to a fellow only about once in a lifetime."

"But you have had tips before, Sid, for you have made quite a little money out of the market. You have over \$200 in the savings bank that you have made outside of your wages."

"I have exactly \$260, Nellie. But that is scarcely a

drop in the bucket. With that I can only buy 100 shares of Lehigh Valley on a ten per cent. margin."

"Well, 100 shares are a good many. You have never been able to buy more than twenty-five shares of a stock before. Suppose this stock goes up ten points, as I should think it ought to, you will make a whole thousand dollars. Wouldn't that be just grand!"

"That's all right, sis. But just think if I had 1,000 shares I'd make \$10,000 in place of \$1,000. Besides, I'm willing to bet it will go up at least twenty points."

"You're a greedy boy. Why not be satisfied with what you get out of it?"

"Did you ever know anybody in this world who didn't want a good big slice of the earth when he saw a chance to make it?"

"But my brother ought to be different. There is lots of time yet before you for you to make your fortune in, dear."

"But I may never get another tip like this one," he insisted.

"I am sure I should be glad to see you make thousands instead of hundreds if you only could; but if you haven't the money to do it you must be satisfied and thankful to make what you can."

"Well," said Sid, with a little sigh of regret, "I guess you're right, Nellie. In fact, you're always right."

"Thank you, dear, for the compliment. That's worth another kiss," and she gave it to him.

"I wish I could think up a few more compliments at the same price," he laughed.

"You're just the best brother in the world," she replied with a happy smile.

"Are you fishing for kisses, too?" he grinned, giving her a double smack on the lips.

"Aren't you a provoking boy!"

"Say, I've got something to tell you," he said; "something you'll like to hear, I'll bet."

"Then, do tell me."

"You remember, I've spoken to you several times about Elsie Carter, Baring & Co.'s stenographer?"

"Oh, yes. You speak so often about her that I'm almost getting jealous."

"Why, sis! Didn't you tell me you'd like to meet her?"

"Yes, dear."

"Next to you, I'm bound to say she's the finest girl I know."

"Is she? How good you are to put me first when you know that Miss Carter has advantages I do not possess," Nellie replied, a little sadly.

"The only advantage she has over you is health and strength."

"And isn't that a great deal?" asked the patient little cripple softly.

"True," replied Sid, caressing his sister's pale face tenderly. "But it isn't everything, any more than great wealth is everything, as some people seem to so regard it. What I like about Miss Carter is that she's a good, true-

hearted girl. She's pretty, too; but that's only a side issue with me. Well, I lunched with her to-day, and spoke to her about you. I asked her if she wouldn't allow me to bring her here and introduce her to mother and you. She seemed touched when I told her you had so few girl friends. I guess she thought you must often feel lonesome. So she promised to come next Saturday afternoon if her mother had no objection."

"I'm so glad," said Nellie, gratefully. "I should dearly like to meet her. I long so for one nice girl friend that I could really call my own. Do you think she would really care much for a cripple like me?" asked the girl, with a quiver of her lips.

"I am sure she would," replied Sid, earnestly. "I'll bet a dollar you two will become real chums."

"Oh, if I only could think so I'd be so happy, you don't know how happy, Sid, dear," cried Nellie, with tears springing to her lovely eyes. "I'm sure I shall love her. I feel as if I almost knew her already."

"Supper is ready, children," said Mrs. Grant, who had been bringing the dishes containing the evening meal into the dining-room where Sid and Nellie were talking. "Help your sister up to the table."

It was a cheerful meal, and after it was over Sid went out to see a friend who lived in the next block.

Next day Sid drew \$250 from his bank and bought 100 shares of Lehigh Valley Coal & Iron Co. stock on a ten per cent. margin.

An hour after the transaction he saw a sale of 1,000 shares on the ticker for 24 7-8.

Grigsby kept him on the jump that day carrying notes to a score of brokers.

Sid wondered if he was already beginning to pick up Lehigh Valley stock.

The last message of the day he carried over to Baring & Co.

There was no answer to it, so Sid went into Elsie's little den to have a word or two with her.

"I'm glad you came over," she said to him. "It will save me writing to you. Mamma said she has no objection to my calling on your mother and sister Saturday. So," archly, "if you haven't changed your mind, I shall expect to see you here at one o'clock, which is the hour I get off."

"All right," replied Sid, tickled to death; "I'll be on hand to the minute."

As Elsie was busy the boy didn't remain over five minutes with her and then hurried out of the office.

As he turned the corner of the corridor leading to the elevator he stumbled over a long, flat pocketbook.

He picked it up, opened it and found that it contained a dozen endorsed checks for various good-sized amounts, each check made out to the order of Goodwin, Nash & Co., stock brokers, who had an office on that floor.

In addition there were bills to the amount of \$5,000.

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Sid. "What a find! Five thousand cash and," after looking the checks over and

figuring their total, "nine thousand in checks. Fourteen thousand dollars in all. Evidently all this belongs to Goodwin, Nash & Co. I must return it to them."

Such a thing as keeping the money and losing the wallet with the checks never occurred to Sid's mind.

He wasn't built that way.

He was as honest and upright as the day is long.

"Is Mr. Goodwin or Mr. Nash in?" he asked the office-boy as he entered the reception-room of that firm.

"Out at lunch," replied the boy. "You can see Mr. Putnam. He's the junior partner."

"I will see him."

"What name?"

"Sid Grant, from Samuel Grigsby. Take my name to Mr. Putnam."

The boy did so rather ungraciously, and soon returned, saying his boss would see him.

"Well," said Mr. Putnam, wheeling around in his chair and facing Sid with a frown upon his smoothly-shaven face, "what can I do for you? You're from Grigsby, I believe?"

"No, sir. I work for Mr. Grigsby, but he didn't send me here. This is a personal visit."

Mr. Putnam looked his surprise.

"I will listen to you," he said.

"Well, sir," began Sid, "I came to this building with a message for Baring & Co. On my way back to the elevator I found a pocketbook with \$9,000 in checks and \$5,000 in cash. As the checks are made out to the order of Goodwin, Nash & Co., I thought——"

"Let me see that pocketbook," said Mr. Putnam, in some excitement.

Sid pulled it out of his pocket and handed it to him.

The junior partner recognized it at once, even before opening it.

"I sent that to the bank by one of our clerks fifteen minutes ago. Evidently it slipped out of his pocket. Such carelessness is beyond my comprehension. I am very much obliged to you for returning it," he said, glancing over the contents and finding everything correct. "You are certainly an honest boy. You might easily have appropriated that money to your own use and destroyed the checks. No one would have been the wiser."

"I have been taught differently than that, sir. If I had kept that money, with so plain a guide to its owner, I should have been no better than a thief."

"True; but how many boys, or men either, would have resisted the temptation to gain such a large sum? We shall not forget this favor, young man. Let me have your name, so I can tell Mr. Goodwin to whom we are indebted for saving us from such a loss."

"My name is Sid Grant."

"You are employed by Samuel Grigsby?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. You will hear from us. Mr. Goodwin will certainly recognize your honesty in a suitable manner."

"Excuse me, Mr. Putnam, if I say that I did not return

that pocketbook in the hope of getting a reward. I do not expect any. I have simply done my duty, that is all. If Mr. Goodwin chooses to write me a letter of acknowledgment and thanks it is all I ought to expect."

"You seem to be an uncommon boy," replied the junior partner with a smile.

"I hope not, sir," replied Sid, rising. "I think there are many other boys who would have done just as I did under the same circumstances. Good day, sir."

"Good day, Grant. If you ever want a favor that Goodwin, Nash & Co. can grant, don't fail to call on us."

"Thank you, sir. I will remember your kind offer."

With that Sid passed out of the private office, just as a wild-eyed, excited young man came rushing into the reception-room.

"I'll bet a hat that's the clerk who lost the pocketbook," said Sid to himself. "I'd hate to be in his shoes. I'm afraid he'll have a strenuous time trying to square himself with the firm."

Then Sid walked out into the corridor and started for the elevator.

CHAPTER IV.

SID CLEARS \$10,700 ON HIS LEHIGH VALLEY C. & I. CO. TIP.

Among the letters delivered by the postman next morning at the office of Samuel Grigsby was one addressed to Sidney Grant, bearing the imprint of Goodwin, Nash & Co.

When he opened it a note and a check for \$500 made out to his order dropped into his hand.

The note expressed the thanks of Goodwin, Nash & Co. to Sid for his kindness in so promptly returning to them the lost pocketbook with its contents intact, and hoped he would accept the enclosed check not as a reward but as a token of their appreciation of his conduct in the matter.

"Honesty is the best policy in this world," thought Sid, "whether it brings a recognition of this kind or not. A fellow always feels better when he knows he's done the right thing, and that is a reward in itself. Tainted money never does a person any good in the long run. He may try to fool himself with the idea that it does, but I don't believe it. This \$500 gives me more satisfaction in five minutes than that \$5,000 ever would have done if I had kept it, with the knowledge that I could put my finger on the owner. This money comes in mighty handy just now. I shall buy 200 more shares of Lehigh Valley before I'm many hours older."

When he went to lunch he stopped at the broker's who had bought the other shares the day before for him and gave him an order to purchase the additional shares, which he got this time for 24.

It didn't trouble him much that he was out \$100 on the deal so far, for he was satisfied the stock would soon make an encouraging advance.

Sid watched the ticker pretty diligently when he got the chance, and he saw that there was considerable activity in Lehigh Valley C. & I. Co.

In fact, there was so much doing in that stock that many brokers wondered what was up, and the price went up to 24 5-8 before the market closed at three o'clock.

Personally, Grigsby hadn't bought a share, though he was on the floor nearly all the time from 10 to 3 o'clock, but for all that he was in constant communication with the brokers who did the buying of the Lehigh Valley shares.

Of course, Sid didn't know this, and we merely mention it as a fact, though it has no bearing on our story.

Next morning Lehigh Valley opened at 24 1-8, a drop of half a point from the closing price the day before, but before noon it had gone up to 25.

At half-past twelve the chairman's gavel called a momentary halt in the proceedings on the floor of the Exchange.

In a few words he officially announced the consummation of the deal whereby the Lehigh Valley C. & I. Co. had come into complete control of the Pennsylvania Short Line Railway.

Intense excitement ensued and there was a wild rush of brokers to the Lehigh Valley standard to bid for the stock.

But the stock was scarce.

All who had any of it held on to it like grim death, while those who had during the last two days disposed of their holdings at the low prices between 24 and 25 were kicking themselves for their stupidity in letting it go.

The bidding went on fast and furious with no sales, and the price offered was continually on the rise until 35 was accepted for a few hundred shares, and this went on the ticker.

Sid had been watching the indicator up to the moment he went to lunch, and not seeing a sale of the stock he was interested in he took a run into the gallery of the Exchange while he was out.

He was present when the sale of Lehigh Valley at 35 was made, and his heart gave a great jump, for he realized he was \$3,000 to the good as the market then stood.

When he reached the office another sale at 40 of a thousand shares appeared on the ticker.

Inside of fifteen minutes he had made \$1,500 more.

The last sale recorded just before the Exchange closed for the day was of 1,200 shares at 52.

Sid was almost dazed by the sudden and rapid rise of the stock.

So far his paper winnings were \$27 a share on his first hundred and \$28 a share on his second two hundred, in all \$8,300 profit in half a day.

"Great Caesar!" he exclaimed to himself, "I wonder how much higher it will go!"

He couldn't get home fast enough that afternoon to tell Nellie the good news.

He didn't mean that his mother should know anything about his stock operations until, as he confided to his

sister under a pledge of profound secrecy, he could surprise her by placing in her hands a nice little wad of cash with which to buy herself a new gown and hat and other things she very much needed, and which their limited finances had prevented her from getting.

To Nellie alone had Sid confided the fact that he had a small growing account in a savings bank, and the last thing Mrs. Grant would have thought of was that her son had engaged in any stock speculating.

Nellie saw by her brother's excited face that something unusual was in the wind, and she waited impatiently for him to tell her what it was.

"It's Lehigh Valley," whispered Sid, for his mother was in the room at the time.

"Has it gone up?" Nellie asked, eagerly.

"Well, I should say it had. The cat was let out of the bag about noon to-day, and then there was the dickens to pay on the floor of the Exchange. I dropped in at the visitors' gallery at 1:30, and you'd have thought there was a regular battle around the Lehigh Valley post. The brokers were falling over one another trying to get hold of some of the shares, and they were not to be got until the price had gone up to 35, when somebody unloaded a measly three hundred shares. They were snapped up before you could wink. The next sale was 1,000 at 40. Now what do you think the stock closed at for the day?"

"I haven't the least idea."

"Fifty-two, and my profits so far, not deducting the commissions, amount to—now don't jump, sis—\$8,300."

Nellie gave a little scream of delight.

"There isn't the least doubt in my mind that I'll clear at least \$10,000 on this deal, thanks to that \$500 I received from Goodwin, Nash & Co. for returning the pocketbook of theirs I was so lucky as to find. You know I told you last night that I put \$480 of that into 200 shares of the Lehigh Valley."

"Yes, dear, I remember. Won't mother be surprised when you tell her of your good luck?"

"Surprised! Well, say, sis, she'll almost have a fit," he chuckled.

"When do you expect to realize?"

"Just as soon as I think high-water mark has been reached."

"There isn't any danger of the stock going down again suddenly, is there?" she asked, a bit anxiously.

"Very little. This isn't like an ordinary boom, where a stock is forced away above its normal value by a clique merely for the purpose of making a big profit on the rise. This is the real goods. Lehigh Valley has practically doubled in value by getting control of the Pennsylvania Short Line Railway. It not only gives the company a low transportation rate to Pottstown, but it places a business rival—the Yankee Doodle C. & I. Co.—at their mercy. Before long that corporation will be compelled to sell out to Lehigh Valley. The par value of L. V. is 50, and it's bound to go ten points above. At any rate I mean

to hold on till it reaches 60, which it ought to do to-morrow."

"And if it does, how much will you make?" asked his sister.

"About \$10,500."

"Why, you'll be rich."

"For a messenger—yes."

"Oh, lots of grown-up people would consider themselves rich if they owned as much as that."

"It doesn't count for much in these days of big fortunes."

"It's awful nice to have so much money to call on, for everything is so high—food, rent and such."

"That's right. I'll give mother \$500, and with the rest I'll keep my eyes on the lookout for another chance to make more."

"Well, I hope you'll be careful not to lose it."

"Don't worry. I mean to be cautious."

Next day was Saturday and Lehigh Valley opened at 53 1-8.

It reached 60 at eleven o'clock, and then came a lull in the trading of this particular stock.

At half-past eleven it had only advanced half a point, so Sid telephoned his broker to sell.

Inside of ten minutes his 300 shares had passed into other hands, and Sid had made \$10,700 profit.

When the Exchange closed at noon Lehigh Valley had touched 61

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH ELSIE CARTER CALLS ON NELLIE GRANT.

At one o'clock Sid, feeling like a king, went around to Baring & Co., and found Elsie Carter waiting for him.

They took a Broadway car on Eighth street and walked down that thoroughfare to Sixth avenue.

Crossing the avenue diagonally, they entered Christopher street and kept straight on till Sid's home was reached.

The visitor was expected and lunch was waiting on the table.

"Mother," said Sid, "let me make you acquainted with Miss Elsie Carter."

"I am very happy to meet you, my dear," replied Mrs. Grant, greeting the girl warmly. "Sid has talked so often about you that you seem almost like an old friend."

Nellie was attired in a new and pretty gown that Sid had bought for the occasion, and she looked very charming as she reclined on the lounge with her crutch beside her.

"This is my sister Nellie, Miss Elsie," said Sid, leading the pretty stenographer to the lounge. "Nellie, this is Miss Elsie Carter."

"I am so glad to know you," said the crippled girl, beamingly.

"And I am very much pleased to make your acquaint-

ance, dear," said Elsie, seating herself beside Nellie and taking her hand in hers. "I have heard so much about you from your brother that I felt I really must see you."

"You are very kind to call on me," replied the invalid, with a glad look in her eyes.

Elsie's almost affectionate manner toward her warmed her heart toward the visitor, and she felt she could love her like a sister.

"Not at all. It was very nice of your brother to invite me. I think I shall like you very much indeed, Nellie. You see, I am growing familiar already," she laughed. "Now you must call me Elsie. There must be no formality between us."

"Oh, I like you already," cried the crippled girl, with an eagerness that quite touched Elsie's gentle heart.

"I am glad to hear it," and she bent over and kissed her new friend on the cheek.

Nellie was taken by surprise, and the tears sprang to her eyes.

"May I kiss you, too?" she asked, with an eager diffidence.

"Why, of course you may," replied Elsie, putting her arm around the girl's waist.

Nellie impulsively threw her arms around Elsie's neck and kissed her.

"I am so happy," she said.

"Great Scott!" grinned Sid. "Don't I wish I was you for about a minute, sis."

Elsie blushed to the temples.

"Don't mind him, Elsie. You don't know what a ridiculous boy my brother is."

"Oh, come now, Nellie, don't try to blast my reputation with Miss Carter. If you do she won't call on you again."

"The idea!" laughed Elsie.

"Now the tea and other things will be quite cold if you don't set up to lunch, my dears," interposed Mrs. Grant, coming into the dining-room.

"Miss Elsie, allow me to escort you to the table," said Sid, gallantly. "I am going to let you sit alongside of sis."

Elsie smiled and permitted him to seat her.

Then he helped his sister to her customary chair, and the little mother began pouring out the tea.

Sid kept things on the hum pretty much during the meal, and the young people enjoyed themselves greatly.

Afterward the boy led the way to the sitting-room, and Elsie insisted on helping Nellie herself.

Sid opened the piano and his sister played a number of pretty pieces in quite a brilliant manner for her visitor, who complimented the crippled girl on the remarkable ability she displayed as a pianist.

Elsie was easily persuaded to remain to tea, but long before that time arrived the two girls had become fast friends, much to Sid's delight.

At eight o'clock Elsie said it was time for her to go home, so Sid got his hat and prepared to see that she got there safely.

"Good-by, dear," said the pretty stenographer, taking an affectionate leave of her new friend.

"Good-by," said Nellie, throwing her arms lovingly about the girl's neck. "You will come to see me again, won't you—soon?"

"Yes, dear. I will be glad to do so. Don't you think that you will become strong enough by and by so that you could come and see me with your brother? My mother will be very glad to know my new chum—for you're going to be my chum, aren't you?"

"Oh, if you will only let me be that I will be the happiest girl in the world," cried Nellie, tears of joy rushing into her eyes.

"Of course I'll let you," laughed Elsie. "I've never had a real chum yet—one that I cared to take to my heart. I'm afraid I'm awfully particular; but you seem to be just the one I'm looking for. There, don't cry, dear. We're going to be the best friends from this out."

She kissed Nellie's quivering lips, bade Mrs. Grant good night, and followed Sid out of the door.

"Miss Elsie," said the lad, his voice full of emotion, as they walked up the street, "you're one of the finest girls in the world. You've made my sister happier than she's been for many a long day. And that makes me happy, because Nellie is everything in the world to me. You don't know how patient and good she is, but you will learn that in time. You are the one girl I would have picked out for Nellie if the choice had been wholly mine. For the kindness and tenderness you have shown my little sister to-day you will consider me your staunch friend. For her sake, if not for my own, I would go through fire and water to serve you. I couldn't say more than that if I talked for an hour."

"Thank you," replied Elsie, softly. "I have taken a great fancy to Nellie, and I feel I shall love her very much. She is the sweetest girl I have ever met."

Elsie lived in Brooklyn, and Sid saw her safely to her door.

"You must come in and let me introduce you to mamma," she said.

So Sid allowed himself to be persuaded and found Mrs. Carter to be a fine little woman.

She was quite taken with the stalwart, handsome boy, and was much interested in her daughter's account of his sister, whom Elsie described as one of the loveliest persons she had ever known.

She invited Sid to call and spend an evening, and hoped that some Sunday he would be able to bring his sister over for a whole afternoon.

On Monday Sid got his check from his brokers, together with a statement of his account.

At the first chance he hired a safe deposit box and put his money, all but \$750, into it for safe keeping.

The \$750 he took home that night, full of anticipation of the surprise he was going to spring on his mother and incidentally on his sister, too.

He showed the roll to Nellie and gave her the wink as they sat down to supper.

"You children seem to be greatly amused about something," remarked Mrs. Carter, toward the close of the meal, for she couldn't help noticing the tickled expression that sat upon their faces, and which she could not wholly conceal.

"Sure we are," grinned Sid.

"I presume I am not to be admitted to your confidence," smiled the little widow.

"If you are very good we may let you in on a great secret," chuckled her son.

"So it's a secret, is it? Children should have no secrets from their mother," replied the widow, beaming upon them.

"That's right, mother. But this is an uncommon secret. I'm afraid if I tell you it will knock you silly."

"Oh, mamma," cried Nellie, "you'll be so happy when you hear it."

"Then it must be a very nice secret."

"It certainly is. Do you know, mother, I think you need a new dress badly," said Sid.

"New dresses cost money, my son, and money is not so plentiful with me that I can afford to be extravagant."

"But supposing somebody presented you with the money to buy yourself a nice new gown and a hat, too, not to speak of a lot of other things I know you are very much in need of, what would you say to that?"

"I am sure I don't know what I should say. I should be very much surprised."

"Don't you know any good friend who would do that much for you?" chuckled Sid.

"No," replied the little woman, shaking her head. "People in our position are seldom blessed with friends who can afford to be so liberal as all that."

"But," persisted the boy, "isn't there two persons in this world who think there isn't any one quite so good and nice as you are? Who are just dying for an opportunity to make you as happy as the day is long? Isn't there?"

"You mean you and Nellie?" answered Mrs. Grant, with an indulgent smile.

"I do. Well, one of these two persons has had a stroke of luck. He has raked in a small wad of boodle. He thinks it is only right that you should come in for a share of his prosperity, so he has brought home a slice of his winnings and he takes great pleasure in handing the same over to you, knowing that you need every cent of it and will use it to the best advantage."

Thus speaking, Sid drew out the roll of bills, counted out \$500 and tossed them over to his mother.

Mrs. Grant was certainly astonished, but her astonishment increased when she opened the wad up and saw how much there was in it.

"Why, Sid, where did you get all this money?" she asked, with a look of wonder.

"I made it, mother."

"Why, there are \$500 here. How could you possibly make all that?"

"I made it out of the stock market."

"But I don't understand how you could do that."

"Don't you? Well, that is only a fraction of my profits from a deal I closed out last Saturday. I cleared \$10,700."

"Sidney Grant!" exclaimed his amazed mother.

"I did, really, mother. Listen and I'll tell you all about it."

He then told her the story of his stock ventures from the time he started in with \$25 he managed to save one way or another.

He explained how he had accumulated \$260 unknown to her; how he had got his tip on the Lehigh Valley C. & I. Co.; how he had found the pocketbook and for returning it to the owners had been presented with \$500, and how with this \$750 he had managed to buy 300 shares of the coal and iron company's stock.

"I sold out Saturday for 60, mother, after buying 100 shares at 25 and 200 at 24. After paying commissions I came into the sum I stated. I have got this \$10,700 locked up in a safe deposit box in Wall street. My \$750 capital on which I operated I am dividing between you and Nellie—\$500 to you and \$250 to sis." Thus speaking, Sid threw the balance of the roll into his sister's lap. "There, Nellie, is a little surprise for you. I thought it wasn't fair to work it all on mother."

Sid laughed with great glee as he saw the look upon Nellie's face as she picked up the money.

And while he was laughing his mother ran around the table and smothered him with thanks and kisses, and after Nellie insisted on taking her innings, so that for ten minutes as he afterward declared, had the time of his life.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW SID TOOK A FALL OUT OF BRADFORD, WINBERRY & CO.

Next day while sitting in the sitting-room of a certain broker's office where Grigsby had sent him with a message he overheard a couple of well-known brokers talking about a deal that was forming in C. & U. stock.

He listened intently to their conversation, though he pretended to be engrossed with his memorandum book.

They paid very little attention to him and carried on their remarks in a low tone; but Sid had sharp ears, and consequently very little they said escaped him.

He found that the stock, which was unknown to him, was selling quite low in the market, owing to the fact that the road hadn't paid a dividend in years and the prevailing impression that it was on the verge of going into the hands of a receiver.

The pool that expected to make a lot of money by booming this particular stock were basing their calcula-

tions on certain inside information the chief member of the combine had managed to get hold of.

What this information was the brokers didn't mention, probably because they didn't know themselves.

Sid heard enough, however, to convince him that C. & U. was a good stock to go into for a quick deal.

So at the first chance he looked up the late quotations and saw that the stock was ruling at 60.

He went to his safe deposit box, drew \$6,000, and taking it around to his broker put it up on 1,000 on the usual margin.

It was nearly a week before C. & U. showed any signs of unusual activity. Then he noticed a great number of sales at prices from 60 1-8 to 63.

After that the price rose rapidly to 70.

Sid had visions of a big haul and was congratulating himself on the probable winning of \$25,000, when he heard Grigsby tell Mr. Baring, as the latter was leaving the office, that in his opinion C. & U. would go to pieces before the day was out.

This statement so frightened Sid that he rushed to the phone and ordered his shares sold.

This was accomplished in a few minutes, and next day he found himself \$9,750 in pocket.

C. & U., however, didn't go to pot as soon as Grigsby had calculated, but kept on up to 78, when the pool having got all out of it that they wanted, abandoned it to its fate, and those who were caught in the crash lost a good bit of money as a matter of course.

A day or two after he had realized on his last deal he was sent over to Baring & Co. with a message, and he took advantage of the fact to go in and have a word with Elsie Carter.

The first thing she said was that Oakley Thorne had met her as she was on her way home the preceding afternoon and had annoyed her with his attentions all the way to the bridge cars.

"I do wish he would leave me alone," she said, with an indignant toss of her head. "If he only knew what I thought of him I don't think he'd be so persistent in his attentions."

"Those kind of fellows are pretty hard to shake," replied Sid. "It is too bad you made his acquaintance at all."

"It was none of my seeking. Miss Sachs, who works for Bradley & Co., right across the corridor, introduced me to him one day when I went to lunch with her, and ever since he seems to make all sorts of excuses to talk with me."

"The only thing you can do is to show him that his society is not agreeable to you. If he's a half-way gentleman he'll take the hint and sheer off."

"How is Nellie to-day?" she asked with a smile.

"She's been feeling tiptop ever since you were at the house. She told me to give you her love when I saw you, and say she hopes you will call on her soon."

"You can tell her I'll call on Saturday afternoon."

"Shall I drop in here for you?" he asked eagerly.

She smiled coquettishly.

"I have no objections."

"All right, then, that is settled," he replied in a satisfied tone, and he took his leave a few moments afterward.

He ran against Oakley Thorne on the ground floor of the building.

That young man gave him a black look, for he guessed he had been up to Baring & Co.'s office, and was sure he had been talking to Elsie Carter.

Sid didn't mind black looks from persons like Thorne, and he went on his way chuckling to himself, for he was satisfied that Oakley's nose was out of joint so far as Elsie Carter was concerned.

The stock market was pretty active those days and Sid had about all the work he could attend to.

It wasn't long before Sid found out that his employer was making a big fight to retain control of the United Traction lines of New Jersey.

He was president of the holding company, and the directors were gentlemen identified with his interests.

The opposition had been buying up such stock as they could find floating around, in the hope that they would secure enough of it to give them a controlling interest.

On the face of it this didn't seem probable, as it was known that the Grigsby clique had a majority of the stock, and certainly there didn't seem to be any likelihood that any of them would part with their holdings.

Still everything is possible in Wall Street.

Jim Bradford, of Bradford, Winberry & Co., was the head and front of the movement that was being made to do up Grigsby and his friends.

Bradford was a fighter from way back, and as foxy as they come, but Grigsby was not a bit afraid of him, or a dozen like him.

The newspapers printed a good deal about the contest between these two men, and said that it promised to be a battle royal between Titans of finance.

At present only the preliminary skirmishing was being engineered by Bradford.

Reporters were constantly trying to reach Grigsby's ear, and were just as persistently side-tracked by Sid when he was in the office at the time one of them appeared on the scene.

Every once in a while one of these gentlemen of the pen succeeded in waylaying the big broker on the street and tackling him for his opinion as to the probable result of Bradford's foray, but all he could get out of Grigsby was a sardonic grin, which meant volumes if one only knew how to translate it.

It was about this time that Sid ran smack against another good thing.

And he wasn't looking for tips either, as he was almost too busy to make use of such a thing.

Still he wasn't the lad to let a snap get away from him at any time.

He accidentally discovered that the Bradford, Winberry & Co. clique were working up a boom in D. & L. shares.

The Bradford people had determined to send it up to 110 if they could and then get out from under and let it fall back to its old standing.

They began operations by circulating rumors against the road, and finally succeeded in breaking the prevailing price so that it fell to 82, at which point they began to load up.

It was at that point Sid found out what they were up to through a pencilled note that fell into his possession while he was in the Vanderpool building, where their offices were located.

Sid felt no compunction about using this information on the principle that all is fair in the stock market, and particularly because his employer and the Bradford crowd were at daggers drawn.

But he resolved to defeat their object of getting hold of a large quantity of the stock at the low price then ruling if he could and make a few dollars himself at the same time.

So he managed to go to his safe deposit box, draw \$16,400 of his \$20,000 capital and put it up on 2,000 shares of D. & L. at 82.

As soon as he was sure his commission had been executed, he caught a five-minute interview with Mr. Grigsby and showed him the note he had found.

Grigsby grinned like a fiend when he read it, patted Sid on the back, grabbed his hat and rushed over to the Exchange.

In ten minutes the big broker and his friends were out-bidding the Bradford brokers on D. & L. and circulating rumors about the road that caused the stock to rush back to 90 in no time, and then send it up to 95.

When it reached that figure, which it did next day, Sid sold out his shares at a profit of \$25,500.

Grigsby also got out at a big profit, selling nearly all his holdings through strange brokers directly to the Bradford brokers, and then Bradford, Winberry & Co., after an ineffectual effort to send the shares above 97, sold out as soon as they could at a fair profit, but far below the million they had started out to make.

They were madder than a nest of hornets, for it was evident to them that their plans had leaked out somehow, though in spite of their best efforts to find out how this had happened, they failed to get an inkling of the true state of affairs.

A few days later they found out that it was Grigsby who had practically done them up, and they were more furious than ever.

CHAPTER VII.

SID IS "BOUNCED" FROM MR. GRIGSBY'S EMPLOY.

Sid had now accumulated a capital of \$46,000, and he began to have visions of presently blossoming out as a broker on his own account.

"I guess I've worked as a messenger long enough. I don't know what Mr. Grigsby's object is in keeping me running his errands for so long, unless he's afraid to employ a new boy, but just the same I'm tired of it. I think I'll have a talk with him."

So he asked for an interview one day and got it.

Then he up and told Mr. Grigsby that he had decided to go into business on his own hook.

He expected to see his employer look disgruntled at the idea of parting from him.

Instead of that Grigsby only favored him with one of his sardonic smiles.

"How much money have you made in your deals on the market?" demanded the big broker, sharply.

Sid nearly fell off his chair, the question took him so much by surprise.

He had never dreamed that Grigsby even suspected that he had been speculating in stocks.

Brokers usually object to their employees doing such a thing, and Sid suddenly began to see visions of a bounce, which was not exactly the way he wanted to separate himself from Mr. Grigsby, even if he did feel reasonably independent in the possession of a fat wad.

"Forty-six thousand dollars, sir," faltered the boy.

Sid expected to see Mr. Grigsby look paralyzed at the size of his winnings, but again he was disappointed.

Grigsby merely regarded him with another hyena-like grin.

"Humph!" the broker ejaculated; "pretty good for a boy like you. How much did you make out of the rise in D. & L. the other day?"

"I made \$25,500, sir."

"And I made \$250,000 on your tip."

"I'm glad to hear it, sir."

Another sardonic grin from Grigsby.

"As I am not in the habit of taking such tips for nothing, I shall make you a little present. Amos Jordan's seat on the Stock Exchange was sold under the hammer yesterday. Baring & Co. bought it in at my orders. I intend to give it to you."

"To me!" gasped Sid.

"Precisely—you. Now, listen, young man, I'm going to have a talk with you. You called for this interview and thus got a trifle ahead of me; but to-day is as good as to-morrow for what I've got to say. You're about as smart a boy as I have ever come across. You've worked faithfully for me as messenger for something more than three years, and I appreciate it, but just the same I'm going to bounce you just as hard as I can, and the whole Street is going to know that I'm through with you for good and all."

"Do you mean that, Mr. Grigsby?" gasped Sid in great dismay.

"Did you ever know me to say anything I didn't mean, young man?" grinned the big broker.

"No, sir," admitted Sid, looking down in the mouth,

and Mr. Grigsby chuckled as he noticed the boy's expression.

"The whole Street is going to learn that I don't approve of an employee of mine speculating in the market on his own hook while he's working for me."

"That's why you're going to fire me, is it?" said Sid.

"Precisely. I'm going to use that as the excuse. I have been hunting for a reason to bounce you for three months back and now I'm glad to say you've furnished me with one yourself."

"If I had known you wanted to get rid of me I'd have resigned long ago."

Grigsby grinned like a famished goat.

"Young man, you evidently have not grasped my meaning; but I don't blame you. Now, look here; what I am going to say to you is in the strictest confidence. You're going to be publicly bounced from your situation as my messenger, it is true; but you're not going to be bounced from my confidence."

"Sir!" exclaimed Sid, still more bewildered. "I don't quite understand——"

"Keep your ears open and you will," interrupted the broker. "I have watched you closely for the past year and I have decided that you possess all the qualities that go to make up a successful broker. Left to your own devices you were bound to get there sooner or later. For reasons of my own I have resolved to hasten that moment. I want a new broker. Somebody that the Street will never suspect is in collusion with me. If I allowed you to resign as you intended, and you branched out in the way I intend you shall, what would be the inference after your record in my employ? Why, that I was backing you for a start at least. That won't do at all. I have got to adopt some means to disarm such a suspicion, without actually bringing you into disgrace. Nearly every broker in the Street who knows you has a good opinion of you. I have heard you praised a hundred times, and people wonder why I haven't promoted you. That was my business. Your salary has been raised from time to time, but you still remained my messenger. It is part of my business methods that outsiders shall not understand me. When you leave me next Saturday I shall make it public that you and I are through with each other for good. There is a suite of two rooms for rent at No. — Wall Street. You had better hire them as soon as you quit here. You can easily scare up the necessary references. I think you showed me a letter from Goodwin, Nash & Co., in which that firm promised to do you a favor whenever you stood in need of it."

"Yes, sir," replied Sid.

"Very well. Call on Mr. Goodwin next Monday and tell him you are going into business for yourself, and you wish to refer the agent of the building to him. Don't fail to tell him that I have bounced you for speculating on your own hook, and be sure to give me as hard a name as you can—that'll please Goodwin," with a grin, "for he

hates me like poison. I can stand it. You understand my meaning, I guess."

"I am beginning to see light," said Sid, with an intelligent smile.

"Your name will be put up in the Exchange for membership, and as you are so well liked I think you will have no difficulty in getting elected. At any rate, the seat is yours. It is worth \$88,000, and is to that extent a first-class asset. Mr. Baring will furnish you with the name and address of an old gentleman who is a thoroughly capable bookkeeper and cashier. He is acquainted with the stock brokerage business from A to Z, and will be of great value to you as an adviser. He may be fully trusted with the secrets of your business. Mr. Baring will also send you his own stenographer, as it is inadvisable for you to hire a strange girl."

"Do you mean Miss Carter?" asked Sid, with a thrill of pleasure.

"I do. Mr. Barink thinks you and she will pull well together, and it is absolutely necessary to my interests that you have a stenographer who can be trusted implicitly. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir. Miss Carter fills the bill in that respect," said Sid, enthusiastically.

"So Mr. Baring assures me. Now, whatever business I send you must be executed with promptness and dispatch. My orders will in no case come to you direct, but through some broker in my confidence, and will invariably be in cipher, the key to which I will furnish you. If I require to see you personally, a note will reach you to that effect, appointing time and place. It is almost certain that I shall use you in my fight to retain control of the United Traction Co. I expect to have the battle of my life with Jim Bradford for the upper hand in that company. He and Winberry have held a considerable block of the traction stock for some time, and they have been gradually increasing their holdings. Still under ordinary circumstances they can only get so far and no farther. But a certain contingency is liable to arise in the near future which will throw a big block of the stock on the market. If this happens, and Bradford buys it in ahead of me, I am beaten. He is fully informed of this chance, and will use every endeavor to prevent me from getting hold of it. I anticipate some trick on his part at the critical moment, and I propose to go him one better. It will be a case of diamond cut diamond between us. If Jim Bradford can get the better of Samuel Grigsby it will be a red-letter day for him in Wall Street. Now, Sidney, I am giving you the chance of your life to show what you're made of. I have little fear but you will come out a winner, for I am seldom mistaken in my estimate of a person's character. I am going to bank on you to a considerable extent. It is not impossible that the fate of my fortune may hang on the result of something you may be called upon to do. I am not afraid that you will fail me."

"You can depend on me to the letter, Mr. Grigsby," replied Sid earnestly.

"I am sure I can. Remember, your reward will be in proportion to the service rendered. That is all now."

Grigsby returned to his desk, and Sid returned to the reception-room to ponder over the new phase of the business career he was about to enter upon.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW SID'S DISCHARGE AFFECTS DIFFERENT PEOPLE.

"Mother," said Sid, walking serenely into the dining-room that afternoon just before supper, "I've got the G. B."

His sister looked up quickly from the lounge on which she was seated, and noticing the grin on his features began to smile as if Sid had said something amusing.

"What do you mean, my son?" asked Mrs. Grant, staring fixedly at her boy.

"Just what I say, mother. Mr. Grigsby has given me the bounce, to take effect on Saturday," laughingly.

"Why, Sid, you ridiculous boy!" cried his sister; "what do you want to startle mother that way for?"

"Don't you believe me?"

"Why, of course I don't. Just as if Mr. Grigsby would discharge you! Aren't you his right bower, as you've always called yourself?"

"Sure I am; but when the little joker comes into the game it takes the right bower, and there you are."

"What little joker are you talking about?"

"That's a secret, sis."

"I thought you were not to have any secrets from me?" said Nellie, with a pout.

"This is not my secret, so I can't share it with you."

"Please do explain what you are talking about."

"Well, Mr. Grigsby has discovered that I have lately made a practice of speculating in the market. He says he can't have an employee in his office who tries to make as much money as the boss; therefore he said he thought it was time that I sought fresh fields and pastures new. So he has engaged another messenger to try and fill my old shoes, and the new boy starts in on Monday morning."

"And you are promoted to a better position in the office, is that it?" Nellie said beamingly, for she thought she had guessed the riddle.

"No," replied Sid. "You're wrong. I'm not promoted. I'm out of the office for good and all."

"Oh, Sid," exclaimed his mother and sister in one breath.

"On Monday I start in business for myself," grinned the boy.

"In business for yourself!" they cried in surprise.

"Precisely, as Mr. Grigsby would say. I'm going to be the boy broker of Wall Street—the only one of his kind. A hummer from Hummerville, and don't either of you make any mistake about it."

"You don't really mean that, Sid," said his sister, doubtfully.

"I do mean it, sis," in a tone which assured them he was quite in earnest.

"Come, tell us all about it."

"I will as soon as I have had something to eat. Put up the supper, mother, will you—that's a good dear. I'm as hungry as a hunter."

Mrs. Grant, very much fluttered over the news that her son was about to leave his fine position, as she had always considered it, hastened to dish up.

Nellie herself was in a flutter of excitement and curiosity to find out what her brother's plans were.

She knew that he had something like \$46,000 in the vault of the trust company, and that looked like a fortune in her eyes.

As he had met with uniform success in his ventures on the market, she was not so surprised that he had decided to branch out on his own account.

In fact, to say the truth, she was rather delighted than otherwise that her brother was about to become a real Wall Street broker.

How nice it would be after this to refer to him as such.

How proud she would be of his business success, for surely he would now go on and make a raft of money; they would move into the new house Sid had been talking about buying, and mother and she would have everything they could wish for.

Oh, yes, it would be just the nicest thing in the world for Sid to be a broker.

When the meal was nearly over Sid told his mother and sister as much about the change in his business prospects as he felt it would be fair to Mr. Grigsby to confide to them.

There are some business secrets it is necessary and right a person should keep to himself, even from his family, and Sid's arrangements with Mr. Grigsby was one of that sort.

By Saturday it was known all over Wall Street that Sidney Grant, Grigsby's crack-a-jack messenger, had been fired because he had speculated in the market unknown to the big broker and contrary to his business views.

A great many brokers, while they admitted that the boy should not have broken this unwritten rule of Wall Street, nevertheless were surprised that Grigsby should have sacrificed his own interests so far as to let such a bright and capable lad go.

Several brokers sympathized with Sid on the loss of his job and immediately offered him a clerkship in their own offices at a good salary.

"Thanks for your offer," was the boy's polite reply to each of the gentlemen, "but I've decided to go into business for myself. I've made a good bit of money lately. And if I have been so successful while a messenger I don't see why I can't do ever so much better as my own boss."

Of course the brokers were very much surprised to learn that Sid had been so fortunate as his words indicated, as well as that he intended to open up as a broker.

They had no idea he had made more than a few hundreds, or possibly a thousand or two, and were curious to find out just how much he was worth.

But Sid didn't believe in letting other people know his business, so he laughingly replied that he had acquired Amos Jordan's seat in the Exchange, and that his name was about to be put up for membership and he hoped all the brokers would vote for him, which they promised to do, though they thought he was joking.

They made inquiries, however, and found that the Jordan seat had really been purchased for Sidney Grant, and they began to marvel how he had managed to make so much money.

They tried to find out what broker had been acting for Sid, and failed to discover, as Flint, Peabody & Co., who had done what business Sid had transacted, were not disclosing the confidential matters of their customers.

All the brokers who were opposed to Grigsby, or had lost money through his clever manipulation of the market in years past, were rather glad to learn that the big operator had made such a mistake as to bounce so valuable an employee as young Grant, who they had found from experience was incorruptible.

Jim Bradford snickered when the news reached his ears.

He immediately told his partner, Winberry, and they both laughed over the circumstance.

"The old fox will never get another boy anywhere like Grant," remarked Bradford. "He's a pretty clever youth, that Sid is. Why, he's going to open an office for himself on Wall Street, and Ned Baker told me he has actually purchased Amos Jordan's seat that was sold the other day for \$88,000. What do you think of that, Winberry?"

"I think it's a cock-and-bull story, Jim. Where would that boy get \$88,000?"

"He is reported to have made a raft of money out of the market in the last year. I've heard half a dozen brokers speak about his phenomenal success."

"If he was making so much money it's a wonder he stayed so long with Grigsby. Most boys wouldn't."

"Look here, Winberry. It's my opinion that Grant made his hauls out of tips picked up at Grigsby's by tricks that were dark, and that Grigsby found him out and fired him. It stands to reason he couldn't have made so much money in the ordinary course of business. I heard that he made \$50,000 out of D. & L., where Grigsby euchred us. If he did, that's enough to show me that he was on to the old man's game and took advantage of it."

"Well, how do you know that this boy is going into business for himself?"

"Goodwin told me so. He said Grant called on him to ask him if he could refer the agent of the Monadnock building to him. He wants to hire an office there."

"How came he to go to Goodwin for reference?"

"Some time ago he found a pocketbook belonging to Goodwin, Nash & Co., containing the day's bank deposit, a matter of a large amount, a good part in cash. He found

it in the corridor of this building, and instead of swiping the money and getting rid of the checks, as he might easily have done, he returned it intact to the firm."

"The dickens he did! He's a remarkable boy," said Winberry.

"That made him solid with Goodwin. Goodwin is glad of a chance to help him anyway, if only for the satisfaction of getting in a rap at Grigsby. You know the firm hates the old fox as bad as we do on account of the squeeze he gave them in Rock Island six months ago. Goodwin said that Grant is down on his old boss like a carload of bricks, and can't say anything too bad about him."

"That so? Perhaps we might work the boy now for a few pointers on Grigsby's methods. We can put a little business in his way, pat him on the back, tell him how smart we think he is, and then pull his leg for all it is worth."

"That's a good scheme," grinned Bradford. "Just leave him to me. I'll work him to the queen's taste."

"We might take him in on this United Traction matter. It is not impossible that he may be wise to some of Grigsby's latest tricks to maintain his hold on the stock. If we're going to beat the old man out on this deal we've got to use every advantage we can get hold of."

"I'll keep your suggestion in mind, and if I think we can trust him I'll use him. I dare say he will be glad to take Grigsby down a peg out of revenge for his bounce."

The two brokers then began to talk about something else.

CHAPTER IX.

SID GRANT AND OAKLEY THORNE COME TO BLOWS.

Sid hired the suite of offices in the Monadnock building to which he had been referred by Mr. Grigsby for \$1,800 a year, with the privilege of renewal at \$2,000.

There was one fair-sized room which he intended to use as a counting-room, with a small space near the door for visitors to sit.

On one side of this was a small room he proposed to fit up as his private den, and a still smaller one beyond he intended for Elsie's use.

Each room not only communicated with the other, but also had a door opening on the public corridor.

As soon as the lease was signed and the key was in his possession Sid bought the necessary rugs and office furniture, ordered such printed matter and stationery as he would need in the business, and sent a sign painter around to letter the counting-room door with the words, "Sidney Grant, Stock Broker," and the other two doors simply "private."

That same afternoon he went over to the Manhattan National Bank, according to prearrangement, and met both the president and cashier.

Some powerful influence had secured him the special

favor of becoming a depositor at this bank, with the privilege of signing checks on the concern.

After signing a certain document, which the president retained, he followed the cashier to his room and signed the signature book.

Then he received a pass book with an entry for the \$46,000 he had brought with him, and the formalities were over.

Evidently somebody had guaranteed to be responsible for all the boy's transactions with the bank.

While Sid was superintending the placing of the desks and other fixings on Tuesday morning, a gray-haired, pleasant-looking man of 65 came into the outer office and asked Sid if his name was Grant.

"Yes, sir. Are you Mr. Black, who has been recommended to me as a cashier and bookkeeper?"

The visitor answered in the affirmative, and produced a letter to that effect from Baring & Co.

"I am glad to know you, Mr. Black. I think we shall get along very well together," said the boy, who liked the man's appearance.

"I hope we shall, Mr. Grant," replied the other, with as much respect as though talking to an older person. "When shall you be ready for me?"

"You had better come to-morrow. There will be nothing for you to do, it is true, except to answer the queries of curious people who may call to find out who the new tenant is. I dare say you know how to deal with such persons."

"Yes, sir; I think I do," replied Mr. Black, with a faint smile.

"As soon as the books come you will take charge of them, and I will furnish you with the necessary information with which to open them. The safe will be delivered to-morrow, and you can have it placed where you like. You can also alter the position of your tall desk to suit yourself as soon as the brass partitions are in place."

He showed his new bookkeeper through the suite, and then the man went away after promising to call in the morning at ten o'clock, which was the hour that Sid asked him to report.

At one o'clock, while Sid was sitting at his desk in his own room, glancing over the previous day's market reports, there came a knock on his door.

"Come in," said Sid, wheeling around in his pivot-chair.

The door opened and in walked Elsie Carter, smiling demurely.

Sid jumped to his feet at once and extended his hand eagerly.

"Welcome to my new quarters, Miss Elsie. Allow me to hand you to a chair."

"Thank you, Mr. Grant," she replied, with a rippling laugh.

"Mr. Grant! Oh, come now, Miss Elsie, I wish you'd make it Sid when we're all by ourselves."

"Oh, dear me, that wouldn't be proper, would it, considering you're my new employer?"

"Oh, pshaw! There's nobody here now to listen to you. I'm going to call you Elsie after this when we're alone—that is, if you don't object. What's the use of any formality between us? Of course, when I address you before others it will be Miss Carter."

"Very well—Sid."

"That's better. I presume you will be ready to report here Monday morning at nine o'clock, or you can make it half-past nine until further notice."

"Oh, yes. I was awfully surprised the other day when Mr. Baring called me into his office and told me that for very important reasons he was going to send me over here to work for you. He hoped I had no objection to making the change, for the work would be easy compared to what I was accustomed to handle in his office."

"Well, you haven't any objection, have you?" asked Sid, earnestly.

"Why, of course not," she laughed.

"You won't find me a hard boss, I assure you, Elsie."

"I am not afraid of that."

"Would you like to see your den?"

"I don't mind," she answered.

Sid took her into the inner office, which was furnished with a rug, a neat table for the typewriter, a round beveled glass mirror for her to "see if her hat was on straight," as Sid jocosely remarked, and several water colors on the wall.

"Isn't it a lovely little office?" she exclaimed. "Ever so much better than my corner at Mr. Baring's."

"I'm glad you like it. When you go to lunch you can let yourself out this door. It has a Yale lock. I will give you the key on Monday."

Elsie seemed very much pleased with her new quarters.

"Now, Elsie, the reason you were sent to me is because I am likely to have some business of a very confidential nature with a certain broker, whose name must never be identified with this office. You may readily guess who that person is, but you must never breathe it outside. You are known to be thoroughly reliable in that respect; that's why you are engaged to work for me."

"Well, I must get back to the office. Mr. Baring told me to drop in and see you and let you know that I would come on Monday."

"All right, Elsie."

"Don't forget to give my love to Nellie."

"Of course not. She wouldn't forgive me if I did. She seems to be getting stronger ever since she and you became chums, and I'm going to have mother bring her down here some day."

"That would be real nice. I hope it will be soon."

"I hope so myself. Good-by."

"Good-by, Elsie," said Sid, holding the door open for her to pass out.

As he did so they came face to face with Oakley Thorne, who was standing outside staring at the inscription on the ground glass with the utmost astonishment.

Evidently this was the first intimation he had had that Sid had branched out for himself.

He was somewhat disconcerted when the door suddenly opened and Sid and Elsie appeared in the opening.

He raised his hat in a gallant manner to the girl, and without noticing the young broker at all, remarked:

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Miss Carter."

Elsie bowed coldly and walked off toward the elevator. Much to Sid's indignation, Oakley hurried after her and had the nerve to grasp her by the arm.

She started back, and without a word of recognition endeavored to pass him.

Thorne, though taken aback by her chilliness, nevertheless refused to be repulsed.

"Aren't you going to say a word to me, Miss Carter?" he asked, with a smirk.

"I am in a hurry, Mr. Thorne," she replied, icily.

"Well, I'm going your way. We can walk together. I have something to say to you."

"I must decline the honor of your company, Mr. Thorne."

"Why, what's the matter?" he asked in some surprise.

"I thought you and I were great friends."

"Acquaintances you mean, Mr. Thorne. And very recent ones at that."

"Even so, Miss Carter. Still you never treated me so coolly before. Has Grant been trying to cut me out in your good opinion?" he added, angrily.

"You have no right to make such a remark, Mr. Thorne," she replied spiritedly.

"But I want to know if he has, so that I can chastise the little puppy as he deserves," persisted Thorne, almost furiously.

"Are you referring to me, Mr. Thorne?" exclaimed a voice at his elbow.

Turning about quickly he confronted Sid, who had followed them unobserved.

"Yes, I am referring to you, you fresh kid," snarled Oakley, shoving his clenched fist within an inch of Sid's nose. "You want to keep your lying tongue off me, do you understand?"

"Keep your fist away from my face," exclaimed Sid, brushing his arm aside.

With a howl of rage, Thorne struck out at him.

Sid jumped aside, but only partially avoided the blow.

Elsie gave a suppressed scream as she saw the blood trickle from a cut inflicted on Grant's forehead by a big ring Thorne wore on his little finger.

Then something happened to Oakley.

Sid sprang at him and with one blow knocked him staggering against the corner of the elevator, where he slipped and went down in a heap.

CHAPTER X.

A DEAL IN OPTIONS.

"Oh, Sid, Sid!" exclaimed Elsie, running to him; "this is dreadful. Are you much hurt?"

"A mere scratch, Elsie," he replied, reassuringly, brushing the blood drops away with his handkerchief.

Oakley Thorne, after lying dazed for a moment or two, sprang to his feet and made a dash at Sid, his face distorted with rage.

Sid side-stepped and easily avoided the blow the infuriated young man aimed at him.

But Thorne wanted vengeance, and nothing would stop him till he got it.

The result was Sid had to get busy in his own defense.

"You will have it, eh?" said the young broker, parrying another vicious blow and smashing Thorne in the mouth with a force that set his teeth rattling.

"I'll kill you!" cried Oakley, making another dash at his opponent.

Sid coolly thumped him in the eye this time, while Elsie looked on with frightened, distended eyes.

Thorne was so beside himself that he scarcely heeded the blow, but came on again like a wild beast.

A couple of brokers came out into the corridor at this moment, and they regarded the combatants in surprise.

"What does this mean?" one exclaimed.

Biff!

Swat!

Sid struck out with his left and right in quick succession and Thorne went down on the concrete floor like a stricken ox.

"You'd better take the elevator, Elsie, and get away from this," whispered Sid, gently urging her away.

"Oh, I can't leave you, Sid," she cried, anxiously, grasping him by the arm. "Let us go back to your office, please."

"What, run away from this cur? No, no, Elsie. He provoked the racket, and it is for him to call it off."

Thorne staggered to his feet and was caught and held by one of the brokers.

Several other persons came into the corridor, attracted by the rumpus.

"What's the trouble?" asked the other broker, turning to Sid.

"This fellow attacked me, that's all. He was forcing his attentions on this young lady, who is a friend of mine, and I interfered."

"Do you know him?"

"I do. His name is Oakley Thorne. He is margin clerk for Bradford, Winberry & Co."

"Let me get at that puppy!" roared Thorne, struggling with the gentleman who held him.

"If he tackles me again I'll pound the face off him,"

said Sid in a tense tone. "He'd better go away and leave me alone if he knows when he's well off."

"If you two don't call a halt this is likely to be a police matter," remarked the broker. "Are you employed in this building?" to Sid.

"No, sir. My name is Sidney Grant. I am a stock broker, and have only just moved into the building."

"Why, you're only a boy."

"Don't worry about that, sir. I may be only a boy in years, but I'm a man all right when it comes to business, or defending myself against cads like that fellow."

The broker who had hold of Thorne was a big man, and the margin clerk, furious as he was, could not break away from him.

"Here, young man, this has gone far enough. Pick up your hat and leave the building or you may find yourself in a station house cell," he said to Oakley.

"Let me go, will you?" demanded Thorne.

"I will if you promise to leave here peacefully. Otherwise I'll send for the superintendent of the building and hand you over to him."

"Do come away, Sid," begged Elsie.

"I think you had better retire to your office, young man," said the other broker to Sid. "The sight of you only infuriates that chap. As soon as you are out of the way he'll cool down."

"Yes, yes, do come," urged the girl.

Somewhat against his will, Sid yielded and retired from the fray.

"Give me your handkerchief, Sid," Elsie said.

She ran to the wash basin and wetting the handkerchief came back to where the young broker had seated himself and gently washed the blood away from the trifling wound.

"You're very good, Elsie," he said, looking at her wistfully. "But that's not worth bothering about."

He was glad, however, to feel her warm fingers resting upon his forehead, and when she removed the handkerchief he seized her hands in his and kissed them.

Elsie blushed vividly, but did not remove her fingers from his grasp.

"I'll tell Nellie how kind you were to me, and she won't forget it."

"It isn't worth mentioning," replied Elsie, with downcast eyes.

"Elsie," said Sid, "forgive me for engaging in this scrap, but I couldn't stand by and see that fellow annoying you."

"There is nothing to forgive. You were very good to put yourself out for me. I shall never notice Mr. Thorne again."

"I hope you won't. He is not worthy of your attention."

"He wanted to walk back to the Vanderpool building with me, and when I refused to have him do so he spoke disrespectfully of you. He is no gentleman."

"That's right. He isn't."

"I hope you won't have any further trouble with him, Sid. It would worry me if you did."

"Would it, Elsie?" asked Sid. "Do you really care for me as much as that?"

"I must go now," she replied, blushing to her hair. "Mr. Baring will wonder what has detained me so long."

"I will see you as far as the elevator. Will you call and see sis Saturday?"

"Yes," she replied in a low tone, not looking at him.

"Thank you. Nellie will appreciate it very much."

When they went out into the corridor again it was empty, and Sid rang the bell to stop a descending cage.

After she had stepped aboard she smiled a demure good-by and he went back to his office.

Sid opened up shop for business on the following Monday.

Between ten and the hour when Sid went to lunch quite a number of brokers who were on speaking terms with the boy visited him to inspect his "sheep-shearing" apartments, as they jokingly called the office.

They talked in a hail-fellow-well-met strain, and assured Sid that they wouldn't do a thing to him when they initiated him on the floor of the Exchange, if he succeeded in getting elected to membership.

"I dare say you'll do me up," laughed the new broker; "but it's only once in a lifetime, so I guess I can stand it."

"You'll be in good trim to take the Masonic third degree after we get through with you," laughed a broker named Jones, winking at the others.

"I suppose it will be permissible to get square on you chaps afterward, won't it?" asked the boy.

"In what way?"

"Oh, I mean to take a fall out of some of you in the market the first thing you know."

"Oh, you're dreaming," grinned Broker Jones. "What you want to do is to keep a mighty tight grasp on your bank account, or some of us will have a big slice of it before you've cut your eye teeth."

"I'm not worrying about my bank account. I expect to double it before the year is out, at your expense possibly, Mr. Jones."

"Mine! Ha, ha, ha! I like that. You're welcome to all you get from me, my boy broker. Perhaps you'd like to buy a nice little block of M. & N. stock. It's ruling at 72 to-day. I'd like to get rid of it."

"No, thank you. I don't want any to-day."

"I thought I'd make you take water," grinned Broker Jones, half sneeringly.

Sid didn't like the challenge for a cent, so he turned quickly on the broker and said:

"Tell you what I'll do. I'll take an option of ten days on 1,000 shares of that stock if your price is right. How much do you want cash down?"

"Are you talking business, or only through your hat?" asked Jones.

"I'm talking business, Mr. Jones."

The other brokers laughed heartily.

"It's up to you, Jones," several of them said.

"I'll let you have it for \$600."

Sid thought a moment.

"All right, I'll take you. Write it out and I'll give you my check for the amount."

"Where do you bank?"

"Manhattan National."

"You're not 21 yet, are you?" asked Jones.

"No, sir."

"And you have an account at the Manhattan National?"

"Yes, sir. Better ask Mr. Williams, the cashier, if you have any doubts on the subject."

"I always understood that it wasn't according to Hoyle for business banks to accept deposits from minors."

"It isn't," grinned Sid; "but the president made a special exception in my favor, because he knows I am going to clean some of you chaps out of a lot of your fleece and he wants my account badly."

"Well, you have got an all-fired gall, I must say," gasped Jones. "Here's your option. Where's your check?"

"Here it is," replied Sid, writing it out. "Now how much will you give for me to let you off?"

"Well, if you haven't a nerve! I never made \$600 easier in my life," said Jones as he folded up the check and placed it in his vest pocket.

"You only think so, Mr. Jones. See that you have that stock when I call for it ten days from now."

"I'll have it all right, only you won't want it. You've bought the option at 72. Ten days from now it will be in the sixties."

"Maybe it will. You're taking that chance. Better buy it to-day if you want to make that \$600."

"Thanks for your advice, young man. As a broker you're only in your swaddling clothes. After you have bought a few more options like this one you'll learn wisdom."

"It's a wonder you haven't learned wisdom enough not to sell such an option on a rising stock."

"That's a good one," laughed the other brokers.

As a matter of fact, the stock on which Sid had bought the option was on the eve of a boom, and he had just discovered that fact and was arranging to buy 5,000 shares on a margin from Flint, Peabody & Co.; but Jones and the others were not aware of this important fact.

So when Broker Jones chucked his bluff Sid took him up.

The result was in five days time Jones, who didn't hold a single share when he sold the option, but expected to buy it in below 72, was rushing around like a wild man trying to get the thousand shares as close to 72 as he could.

The stock, however, was scarce for several days after the rise began, as people who had it held on to it when they saw it going up in value.

Finally Jones had to pay 76 for the 1,000 shares.

Then he notified Sid that he was ready to deliver it.

The boy, however, coolly responded that there was no hurry, as the option had five days yet to run.

Sid's reply made Jones mad because his money was tied up in the 1,000 shares, representing \$76,000 to him.

The stock was liable to go to 90 inside of those five days, and here he was pledged to deliver it at 72.

In any case, he would be out \$4,000 if the stock went no higher.

On the morning of the tenth day Sid sold his 5,000 shares for 85, clearing nearly \$64,000.

Then he called on Jones for the 1,000 shares, sending his check for the full value—\$72,000.

As soon as they had been delivered by the disgusted Jones, he took them around to Flint, Peabody & Co. and ordered them sold at the market price, which had risen to 86.

They were soon disposed of and thus Sid added \$14,000 more to his bank account at Broker Jones' expense.

One or two of the brokers who remembered the transaction in Grant's office, followed it up, and when they found out that their brother operator had been badly caught by the boy broker they circulated the news all through the Street, and so Jones didn't hear the last of his option for many days thereafter, while all the brokers complimented Sid on his shrewdness.

CHAPTER XI.

JIM BRADFORD CALLS ON SID GRANT.

"If luck sticks by me in this fashion I'll be a millionaire in no time at all," said Sid to himself on the morning following the sale of the 1,000 shares of M. & N. stock he had received from Broker Jones, as he regarded with complacency Flint, Peabody & Co.'s check for \$85,750, which, together with the customary statement of account, he had received in the morning mail. "Here I've been just two weeks in business and I've cleared nearly \$77,000, and I've not yet been elected a member of the Exchange. After I have deposited this check I'll have a bank account of \$123,000. Counting the value of my seat in the Stock Exchange, I'm worth over \$200,000. Mother might as well pick out a residence in the suburbs that she and sis would like to live in. There's a nice place I was looking at in Caryl that we can get for \$8,000. If it suits mother I'll buy it for her right away and we can move up there."

He called in Elsie and dictated several letters to her.

Then he showed her the check and told her what his recent profits were in the two M. & N. deals.

"You are making money fast, aren't you, Sid?" she said, with a smile.

"Yes, it is coming in quite rapidly, but it doesn't follow that it will continue to come in at the same rate. If it did I should begin to fancy I was slated to become a John D. Rockerbilt one of these days."

"I am very glad you are so fortunate," she said.

"Thank you, Elsie. But money isn't everything in this world."

"It seems to be regarded as the main chance down here," she replied. "Even the money kings, with all their millions, can't gather it in any too fast to suit their views."

"That isn't any dream, Elsie. Look at the trusts, how they are laying it all over the people. It looks to me as if they'll have all the money that's in the country by and by, while common people like us will be chasing snowballs. It's simply fierce."

"It is, indeed. I don't know how half the people manage to live."

"They don't live. They just exist. That was the way with mother, sis and I a year or so ago. It took everything in sight to satisfy our landlord and furnish us with something to eat and drink. Things are different since I got a start. Now, Elsie, here's a letter in cipher which you can copy off on your machine on a sheet of blank paper. Here is a plain envelope which you can address to Samuel Grigsby. You've got his Wall Street number. I shall want you to take it down to the branch postoffice, put a special delivery stamp on it and mail it."

At that moment his messenger and office boy knocked at the door, and, being told to come in, said there was a gentleman outside who wanted to see him.

"Did you get his name?" asked Sid, as Elsie retired to her room.

"Yes, sir. It's Bradford."

"Bradford! Is it a tall man with a black mustache?"

"Yes, sir."

Sid gave a low whistle.

"That's Jim Bradford, sure enough," he thought. "I wonder what business he has with me? Does he suspect anything, and has come over to pump me? Or what can be his motive? It must be something worth while, or a big gun like the senior partner of Bradford, Winberry & Co. wouldn't drop in on a boy broker like me. I must be on my guard." Then he said aloud:

"Show him in."

A moment later Grigsby's bitterest opponent walked into the little room.

"Hello, Grant," he said, holding out his hand in a friendly way; "glad to see you're one of us. So you shook Grigsby at last, eh?"

"Hardly. It was Mr. Grigsby who shook me. But I don't think I've lost anything by it. Take a seat, Mr. Bradford. What can I do for you?"

"Well, you might go on the curb and see if you can get me 5,000 Erie preferred at 52."

"Is that an order?" asked Sid, in some surprise.

"It is. As soon as Winberry and I heard you'd broken loose from Grigsby and gone into business for yourself we decided to give you a lift, if only to get a crack at the old scoundrel, who I've no doubt wouldn't like to see you get on."

"I don't think he'd relish having you put anything in

my way," laughed Sid, as he made a memorandum of the Erie order and handed it to Bradford to sign.

"I guess not," chuckled the broker, affixing his well-known signature to the paper and returning it to the boy.

"Thank you. Small favors are thankfully received," grinned Sid. "I will give this my immediate attention."

"You're welcome. How are you making out?"

"I haven't any kick coming."

"I understand that you were very successful in the market while you were with Grigsby?"

"I did very well for a boy."

"You say that well, Grant," winked Bradford. "Boys don't usually clear very large sums in their little ventures. Now it is generally believed in the Street that you have made \$100,000 or more while you were with Grigsby. Probably more, for you have bought a seat in the Exchange for \$88,000, and you'll be a full-fledged trader as soon as the boys elect you."

"I hope you'll use your influence in my behalf, Mr. Bradford. You know Grigsby may take it into his head to have me turned down."

"I'll do what I can for you, Grant. As I was just saying, you must have made a good thing while you were in Grigsby's employ. Of course, the inference is that you made it through tips that you managed to pick up in his office," said Bradford, pointedly.

Sid was rather startled at this suggestion, which reflected on his loyalty to Mr. Grigsby, and he hastened to deny it emphatically.

"There's not a word of truth in that, Mr. Bradford," he replied stoutly. "Tips don't float around Mr. Grigsby's office or your office either, I guess," he said with a slight smile. "Brokers are pretty careful, as a rule, about what escapes them. I worked over three years for Mr. Grigsby, and during that time he never let me in on the slightest—"

"Of course not," interrupted Mr. Bradford. "That isn't always necessary. You are an uncommonly smart boy—that's your reputation among the traders. Besides, it is believed that Grigsby trusted you to an unusual extent. At any rate, to all appearances you were his right bower between him and his outside brokers. Under such circumstances it is only natural to infer that a cute boy like yourself, after he had saved a little capital, would take advantage of anything that came under his eye."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Bradford," said Sid, flushing hotly. "This looks like an insinuation that I appropriated information in an underhand manner."

"Don't get warm under the collar, my dear fellow," laughed the broker, lightly. "I'm not actually saying that you did anything of that kind."

"But I don't like the inference," answered Sid. "It is a reflection on my character."

"I am not accusing you, Grant," replied Bradford, with one of his wicked smiles; "but Grigsby must have had his suspicions, otherwise why should he have let you down so hard? From what I have heard about the Street he is

mighty sore on you. It isn't so much what he says against you; it's the way he says it. Now, there must have been something pretty serious in the wind when a man like Grigsby fires a boy of your calibre, whom he has educated up in the business for his own personal advantage. I have heard brokers say time and again that in their opinion Grigsby could better spare any two of his other employees than you. Now, in the face of all that, he not only discharges you of a sudden, but he does it in a way that shows he is through with you for good. Under these circumstances you can't have any love for the old fox. If I was in your place, after getting such a throwdown, I'd do all I could to get back at him."

"How can I get back at him?" ventured Sid, hoping to draw Bradford out.

"Oh, there are lots of ways of doing that," said the broker, mysteriously, getting down to the object of his visit.

"You might mention one or two," said the boy, wondering what the broker was aiming at, for certainly with all their shrewdness and experience Bradford, Winberry & Co. had not so far got the best of Samuel Grigsby in any very important particular.

"Look here, Grant, you know there is a movement on foot by certain opposition interests to oust Grigsby and his friends from the control of United Traction. You know that, don't you?"

Sid nodded.

"Of course you do. It is going to be a pretty fight in which everything will count. You know in a general way that Winberry and myself are at the head of the opposition; that we are leaving no stone unturned to win our point—the control of the holding company. If we succeed, Grigsby and his directorate will get the bounce and our crowd will take charge of the road. You follow me, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good. Now anybody who gives us a lift in the fight we shall take care of in a handsome way, do you understand?"

Sid nodded.

"Well, here's your chance if you know any of Grigsby's traction secrets. Name your price for any pointer that will be valuable to us and you shall have the money, spot cash. In addition, I will guarantee to throw a certain amount of business in your direction. Now, Grant, here is the chance of your life. What do you say?"

Sid had no pointer on United Traction in his possession, nor would he have been so dishonorable as to have sold any information that would have injured Mr. Grigsby, even if he had not been, as he was, in his former employer's confidence.

As part of the game he was working in Grigsby's interest it was necessary that he should try and hold Bradford's confidence, and to that end he made a play for time so as to enable him to communicate with his late boss and get a line on his course of action.

"I will consider your proposition," he said. "I do not admit that I have any information about United Traction that would be of any use to you."

"You leave me to judge of that," said Bradford, eagerly. "I'll tell you what I'll do with you," drawing out his check book. "I'll give you \$1,000 now as a kind of retaining fee, as lawyers call it. This is independent of the price for such information as you may have. If your pointer is worth anything to us I will pay you for it according as it pans out. If it is of no value to us, you can keep the thousand anyway. That's fair, isn't it?"

"It's fair enough," replied Sid, "but I can't accept it."

"Why not?" asked Bradford, with a frown.

"Because I must have time to figure on this thing before I think of making any kind of deal with you."

"Nonsense! Why do you want time? I've got the money; if you've got the goods the matter can be adjusted now. In any case you will be \$1,000 in."

Bradford didn't believe in letting anything get away from him.

He had called on Sid with a definite purpose, and he didn't care to leave till he had accomplished that purpose. Sid felt he was being forced into a corner.

He knew he was dealing with a master hand in Wall Street methods.

One of the slickest strategists in the business.

Bradford was a hard man to stand off, yet Sid had to do this somehow, or maybe lose an important advantage which had come his way.

How was he going to do it?

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH SID SELLS A GOLD BRICK TO JIM BRADFORD.

It was an embarrassing moment for Sid, and he was wondering how he was going to extricate himself from the predicament without offending his visitor, when his office boy knocked and announced that two ladies were outside.

He remembered at once that his mother and sister had promised to call on him that morning.

He gave a sigh of relief.

They couldn't have come at a better moment.

He told the boy to send them in, much to Bradford's annoyance.

"Mr. Bradford, this is my mother," said Sid, as Mrs. Grant, nicely dressed, walked into the room.

"Happy to make your acquaintance, madam," bowed the broker, relinquishing his chair.

"My sister," said Sid, presenting Nellie, who looked as sweet as a June rose in a fetching gown, though the crutch under her left arm told a pathetic tale.

"Delighted to know you, Miss Grant," said the big broker.

After a few words had passed between them, Mr. Bradford turned to Sid.

"I'll expect to see you at my office after three," he said. "By that time I hope you will have made up your mind to accept my proposition."

"I will be there," replied Sid.

The broker then wished the ladies good-by and took his leave.

"Mother, if you only knew it you couldn't have dropped in on me at a better time," said her son, in a tone of great satisfaction.

"I am sure I am glad to know that. What a nice office you have! You must pay a good rent."

"Not as offices sometimes go in Wall Street. I only pay \$150 per month for my three rooms."

"You have another one, then?" exclaimed Nellie. "What do you want with so much room?"

"It's only a little den, and is occupied entirely by my stenographer."

"You mean Elsie. Oh, can't I see her?"

"Why, of course you can," he said, opening the door. "Elsie, here are two visitors who are anxious to see you."

Elsie darted into Sid's room like a fawn and had her arms about Nellie in a twinkling.

"You darling chum! How good of you to come all the way down here to see us!"

The girls kissed as though they hadn't seen each other for a year.

Then Elsie kissed Mrs. Grant.

"It's too bad I'm out of this," grinned the young broker as he watched the proceedings with an envious eye.

Elsie blushed and Nellie laughed.

"Your time will come maybe," said his sister, with a sly look at her friend.

"I hope so," replied Sid, while Elsie's face turned scarlet, and she hid it on Nellie's shoulder, whispering to her that she thought she was just awful to make her feel so embarrassed.

"Don't mind me, good people," said the boy, turning to his desk; "I have an important matter to attend to that will require my attention a few moments."

He got out his cipher code and wrote a second message to Mr. Grigsby, telling him briefly about Bradford's visit, his proposition, to which he had to give a definite answer at three o'clock that afternoon, and asked for instructions.

When he had finished this note he turned around in his chair.

"I'm sorry to interrupt this delightful tete-a-tete, but I've got important business for Elsie to attend to. It will take her out of the building a little while, but I'll try to entertain you both myself until she returns, when it will be almost time to go to lunch."

He told Elsie to copy the cipher note in a similar manner in which she had done with the first one and hand both copies and originals back to him.

When she had done this he signed them with a signa-

ture word, which identified the communication as coming from him, placed them in the plain envelope, sealed it carefully and told Elsie to take it to a district messenger office for immediate delivery.

She was gone about fifteen minutes, and during that interval the young broker showed his mother and sister over his offices, with which they were delighted.

Sid then went out to make a business call, leaving the ladies together.

As soon as he came back he remarked it was time to go to lunch.

He took them up to a very nice restaurant on Broadway, where they spent an hour over their meal, after which Mrs. Grant and Nellie took a Broadway car for home, and Sid and his pretty stenographer returned to his office, where he found a messenger boy waiting for him with an envelope.

He signed for it and opened it as soon as he got to his desk.

It was a communication in cipher from Mr. Grigsby, in which that gentleman furnished Sid with a bogus pointer or two to carry to Mr. Bradford.

Sid chuckled after he had deciphered its meaning.

"It's like taking money under false pretenses to sell this thing even to the enemy; but that's the way things are worked every day in Wall Street. Bradford wouldn't hesitate an instant in doing the same thing to Mr. Grigsby. There's going to be a hot old time before the destinies of United Traction are settled. Bradford and his clique will have to be slicker than greased lightning to win the final trick. It's my opinion when the end comes their name will be mud."

Three o'clock found Sid Grant waiting to be admitted to Mr. Bradford's private office.

He had to cool his heels for twenty minutes in the reception-room while the big broker was closeted with an important client.

Then Sid's turn came and he was shown into the inner sanctum.

"Well," said Bradford, in a sharp, business-like tone, wheeling around in his chair and confronting the boy. "Are you ready to talk business?"

"Yes, sir."

"I promised you \$1,000, I think, as an eye-opener."

He took up his checkbook.

"I won't take a cent from you, sir, unless my pointers are worth something to you. I have been thinking over all I could remember about United Traction, and I'm not sure that my information is worth a dollar to you. I'll tell you what I know and it's up to you whether you buy it or not. I want to act as fair as I can. To tell the truth I don't like this kind of business. That's why I hesitated at the office."

Bradford had been eying him like a hawk while he was speaking.

"It seems to be a case of conscience with you, eh?" he laughed, a bit unpleasantly. "You are troubled with a

soft streak. The sooner you lose it the better you'll get on in Wall Street, young man. Everybody is out for everybody else's dough down here, and you want to look to Number One first, last and always. That's a piece of good advice I shan't charge you anything for, though it's invaluable to a new hand like you. Well, what are these pointers you have on tap? Let me hear if they amount to anything, and then we'll talk money."

Sid thereupon laid before the big broker the tips furnished him for the purpose by Mr. Grigsby.

"I'll have to verify this information," said Bradford, when Sid had concluded; "but it looks good enough as it stands for a thousand. I'll give you that much now, and later on I'll send you another check if results seem to warrant it."

"You won't forget to throw some business in my way, too, will you?" said Sid.

"I'll see that you get a share of what we give out," answered the broker, handing the boy his check for \$1,000.

"Thank you, sir," said Sid, rising to go. "I hope you understand that I am not guaranteeing anything. I have given you this information just as it came to me."

"That's all I expect of you, Grant. Good day."

"Good day, sir."

Sid passed into the outer office and came almost face to face with Oakley Thorne.

The margin clerk stepped back with a scowl of deadly hate on his countenance, and clenched his fist as if he meant to strike the young broker.

He thought better of it, however.

"I'll pay you back one of these days, Sid Grant," he hissed, vindictively, and with those words walked on into the counting-room.

"Perhaps you will," chuckled Sid to himself, as he walked out into the corridor, "but it's my opinion you will not."

CHAPTER XIII

HOW SID WINS THE GIRL OF HIS HEART AND WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM AFTERWARD.

Sid did not deposit the Bradford check in his bank, but took it on the following morning to the safe deposit vaults, where he had a box, and locked it up.

He was an honorable boy and he did not think he ought to use money that came to him in a questionable way.

He meant to return that check to Mr. Bradford some day, together with any other he received from the same quarter in a like connection.

When he got back to his office he found an order from Grigsby, which had come through Baring & Co., to purchase 10,000 shares of C. & R. I., to be paid for C. O. D. on delivery to Baring & Co.

He managed to pick up 3,000 shares among the curb

brokers, and the rest he got after making a tour of a number of offices, including Mr. Jones, where he went last.

"Yes," snapped Broker Jones, who hadn't forgiven Sid for the smart deal the boy had worked upon him, "I've got some Rock Island. What are you paying for it?"

"The market price," replied the boy broker, coolly.

"That's 117. I want an eighth more."

"Well, seeing it's you, Mr. Jones, I'll call you. Have you 1,600 shares?"

"Yes. Are you buying them for yourself?"

"No, sir. They will be paid for on delivery to Baring & Co."

"All right. Here's your memo."

"Thank you, Mr. Jones. Good morning."

"Good morning," replied the broker, shortly.

Sid then returned to his office and handed his bookkeeper the evidences that he had purchased 10,000 shares of C. & R. I. for Baring & Co.

"Well, Elsie," he said, as he looked in on his stenographer, who was trying to kill time with a popular novel, "you don't seem to be overworked."

"No," she laughed; "things are rather slow compared to what they were at Baring & Co. Can't you scare up a little more business, Sid?"

"Oh, I've made enough in commissions this morning to pay my office expenses for several months, so I'm not kicking."

"Isn't that nice?"

"Yes, almost as nice as yourself, and that's saying a good deal."

"No personalities, please, Sid," she answered with a pleased smile.

"I can't help telling you what I think of you."

"You forget that you're my employer," she answered with a demure smile.

"Oh, pshaw, Elsie, don't be always reminding me of that fact. I hope some day that the boot will be on the other leg," mischievously.

"Why, what do you mean?"

"That you'll be my boss, though I suppose I'll have to foot the bills."

Elsie suddenly found something very interesting in the page before her, while her face was as red as a full-blown red rose.

Sid looked at her shapely head, with its crown of golden hair, the shell-like ears, the creamy complexion, with its dash of heightened color, the lovely mouth, with its bewitching curves, and the sylph-like form so daintily attired, and he wondered if she ever would be his.

"That seems to be a very interesting book you are reading," he said, coming nearer to her.

"Very," she answered without looking up.

"I wish you took as much interest in me," he went on. She didn't seem to hear him.

He looked at her a moment as if he was going to say something else, but he changed his mind and went to the window and looked out at the blank wall of stone opposite.

There was silence in the room for perhaps five minutes, during which the girl cast furtive glances at him where he stood.

Most girls would have voted him a good-looking boy.

He had a well-chiseled profile, an intelligent forehead, over which his chestnut curls swept in careless abundance, a fine pair of eyes that expressed his every mood, and an athletic figure.

Elsie was certainly not indifferent to his personal qualifications, but she was not saying anything.

Girls don't as a rule, except among themselves, perhaps.

"What are you thinking about, Sid?" she asked, slyly, at last.

"You wouldn't thank me if I was to tell you," he replied, swinging around and facing her.

"Why?" roguishly.

"Because a moment ago you said, 'No personalities, please, Sid.'"

"Oh!" she exclaimed, looking at the book again.

There was another spell of silence.

Finally he braced himself like a person who had determined to risk his all on one cast of the dice.

"Elsie," he said, placing one hand on the book, "I want you to listen to me. I want to tell you that I care more for you than any one in all this world, even Nellie and mother." His voice grew tender and his eyes moist as those loved names dropped from his lips. "I want you to know that I love you with all my heart, with all my soul, and I want you to say that you will marry me some day when I have made my mark in the world. I know you won't be offended with me for telling you this. Tell me, Elsie, do you care for me in the same way?"

She dropped her face in her hands.

Then he slipped one arm around her waist.

She made no movement to repel him, and he felt encouraged.

"Aren't you going to answer, Elsie?"

He gently drew her toward him until her head rested on his shoulder.

"Do you love me, Elsie? Will you be my wife some day?"

"Yes, Sid," she answered, softly, and buried her blushing, happy face on his breast.

That afternoon Sid sent a message to his mother that he wouldn't be home to supper because he was going over to Elsie Carter's house to tea.

It was eleven o'clock when he approached his home, along Christopher street.

At that hour the thoroughfare was lonesome and deserted.

There were two men, however, standing in the shadow of a low stoop.

Both were dressed in rough jackets.

They wore beards and slouch hats.

Sid noticed them standing back in the gloom as he passed, but thought they belonged to the house.

There was also a carriage without a driver drawn up alongside the curb a few feet away.

The next thing Sid knew he was suddenly seized from behind and was being forced toward the carriage.

He was taken so by surprise that for a moment he made no resistance.

Then he brought all his strength into play and almost succeeded in twisting himself free.

He saw that his aggressors were the two men who had been standing near the porch.

Then it at once occurred to him that these fellows were a couple of footpads.

They succeeded in regaining their grip upon him before he could escape.

But Sid was a stout young lad, not easily handled, even by two ordinary men when his blood was up.

These two at any rate found that they had their hands full to hold on to him and force him in the direction they wanted him to go.

One of them, fearing he would shout for help, had put his right hand over the boy's mouth.

Sid deliberately grabbed one of his fingers between his stout molars and bit so that the man almost screamed with pain.

"Slug him, Stetson!" he cried to his companion, at the same time hitting Sid with his left an ineffectual blow in the face.

The man referred to as Stetson struck Sid in the jaw a heavy blow and that made him let go of the other's finger.

In the struggle which ensued the beards on the faces of both men became disarranged, which showed that they were false ones.

Sid finally wrenched one of his arms loose and slugged the fellow whose finger he had bitten.

The blow tore the beard entirely from his face, and the gleam from a distant street lamp falling on his countenance, Sid recognized him.

"Oakley Thorne!" he exclaimed.

Then he received a terrible blow from something hard that fell upon his head from behind, and with flashes of red shooting before his eyes he fell to the sidewalk unconscious.

CHAPTER XIV.

OAKLEY THORNE CROWS OVER SID GRANT.

Some hours afterward, when Sid came to his senses and stared around in the utter gloom of a strange place, he wondered where he was and what had happened to him.

His head ached to beat the band, his tongue was parched as if he had swallowed a handful of salt, and his arms were tied behind him.

He lay on his back in what appeared to be a room with a single window.

A gleam of light appearing under the crack of a door nearby attracted the boy's attention at that moment.

"Hello! I hear footsteps. Somebody seems to be coming this way," he breathed.

A key rattled in a lock, the door opened, and one of the persons who had attacked him on Christopher street entered the room with a lamp in his hand, which he put down on a marble-top table in the center of the apartment.

Sid eyed his visitor closely, and, though his beard was properly adjusted, the boy was convinced this was Oakley Thorne.

He came forward to the mattress on which Sid lay and perceived that the prisoner had recovered consciousness and was looking at him.

"Well, how are you feeling, my buck?" he said.

Sid made no reply to those words, and for a moment or two his enemy glowered down on him as if he had half a mind to attack him, helpless as he was.

"Do you want to know what I'm going to do with you?" said Thorne at last.

Sid didn't answer him.

"I'm going to ship you out of the country."

"Thanks. How are you going to accomplish that project?" asked Sid.

"Never mind how I'm going to do it. It will be done."

"If you should succeed in carrying out your threat, you will pay pretty dearly for it when I get back."

"When you get back!" laughed Thorne, mirthlessly. "You'll never get back!"

"What's to prevent me?"

"You're going to be taken where you'll work for the rest of your life, chained to a gang of rascals who will be glad of such a companion as you to amuse themselves with. You're going to work in a salt mine, Sid Grant, thousands of miles from here, and once you're underground you'll never see the light of day again as long as you live," and the speaker chuckled sardonically, rubbing his hands together as if the picture he drew of the boy's fate particularly pleased him.

"I don't believe you have the power to send me to any such place as you have mentioned."

"I'm going to leave you to dream over the picture," grinned Thorne. "I hope you'll enjoy it."

He took up the lamp, and with a final look at the boy left the room.

Several hours elapsed before the light of a new day began to find its way through the chinks of the closed shutters that barred the only window in the room.

Sid did not close his eyes during that time.

He made several desperate but fruitless efforts to get free of his bonds.

Then he began to consider how he was going to escape from his unfortunate situation.

He didn't believe that Thorne could carry out the diabolical threat he had laid before him, even if the rascal was really in earnest about it, of which he had his doubts.

It was altogether too big a contract for such a person as Oakley Thorne to carry out, with the limited resources he had at his command.

Therefore the prospect did not look as dark to Sid as his enemy intended it should.

He believed that Thorne was trying to frighten him for some purpose he had in view, and the boy smiled scornfully at the idea of such a thing.

In the course of the morning a huge negro appeared, who, without noticing the prisoner, opened the window and with a hammer and nails securely fastened the shutters so that they would not budge.

He then nailed the window frames, after leaving the upper sash down about an inch.

Apparently satisfied, he departed but soon return with a tray containing a plate of hashed meat, some buttered bread and a cup of coffee.

Then he released Sid from his bonds and left the room. Sid had very little appetite, but finally decided to eat in order to keep up his strength.

He saw that there was no knife or fork, only a spoon, and with this he ate the hash.

After he had finished the meal he made an inspection of his prison, but found no loophole by which he could make his escape.

"The prospect doesn't look very cheerful," he muttered. The day passed drearily away.

He paced the room like a caged animal, wondering what would be the end of it all.

He worried himself almost sick thinking about his mother and his crippled sister, for he knew they must be wild with anxiety over his unaccountable disappearance.

His supper was served by the same burly negro, and in this manner four days passed away, and Sid was nearly crazy over his helpless situation.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DEAL WHICH CARRIED WITH IT THE CONTROL OF UNITED TRACTION.

The night of the fourth day had closed in and Sid was desperate enough to attempt anything that offered the slightest chance of opening an avenue of escape.

Oakley Thorne had not reappeared and that was the only atom of satisfaction he had enjoyed since he had been cooped up in the room.

Usually the negro had brought his supper about dark, but though Sid was looking for him to appear any moment he did not come.

"I wonder if they've forgotten me to-night," he thought.

Just then he saw a gleam of light under the door and heard approaching footsteps.

The door opened and, instead of the negro, Thorne appeared with the tray and a lamp.

He looked cautiously about the room before he entered, and seeing that Sid was lying down on the mattress he walked to the table and deposited the tray and the lamp upon it.

Sid sprang to his feet, but Thorne was on the watch and took a revolver from his pocket as he backed toward the door.

A daring idea had darted through the boy's mind when he saw Thorne enter the room in place of the big negro.

He knew he was a match for the margin clerk, with something to spare.

Even the sight of the revolver did not deter the now thoroughly desperate boy.

But, instead of rushing at Oakley, as had been his first intention, he made for the table.

This action threw Thorne off his guard a bit, for he thought Sid was famished and was eager to eat.

Sid had no intention of eating.

He grabbed up the cup of hot tea and hurled it at Thorne, and then jumped for his enemy.

The cup hit Oakley in the chest near his neck and half of the tea flew into his face, causing him to utter a howl of pain.

Before he could recover Sid had him by the throat with one hand, while with the other he tore the revolver from his grasp.

Reversing the weapon, he struck Thorne a stunning blow on the forehead and the clerk went down on the floor.

In a fever of excitement Sid dragged the fellow over to the mattress.

He picked up the cord with which his own hands had been bound and tied Thorne's hands tightly behind his back.

Then he tore a piece off the mattress large enough to effectually gag Oakley.

After that he tied his legs together and left him.

"Now to make my escape from this house," breathed Sid, eagerly.

He turned the lamp low, opened the door, passed through, locked it on the other side, and put the key in his pocket.

Then, with his shoes in his hand, he passed down the stairs to the next floor.

Here an obstacle presented itself.

Two men were coming up the first flight, and he must be discovered unless he returned back to the third floor.

However, he had one other alternative.

The door of what seemed to be a sitting-room near at hand stood ajar.

He decided to enter that room and conceal himself until the way was clear.

Hardly had he got out of sight behind a heavy portiere when the two men entered the room and one of them turned up the gas.

The light fell full on their faces, and Sid was amazed to recognize one of them as Jim Bradford, the big Exchange Place broker, who was dressed in an evening suit.

The two men sat down within earshot of Sid's place of concealment.

"Now, let us proceed to business," said Bradford, in his sharp business-like tones. "You are Gregory Grindle, the attorney for and co-executor of the estate of the late Matthew Bramble?"

"I am that person," replied the other in suave tones.

"You made me a proposition in reference to the block of United Traction stock left to the widow."

"I did, and in accordance with your request I appointed this interview."

"Exactly. Have you obtained an order from the Probate Court empowering you to sell that stock?"

"I have."

"I presume a copy of that order, certified by the Clerk of the Court, is in your possession?"

"It is."

"I should like to see that order. This is a big deal, and it is necessary that I should be fully assured of the ground I stand on."

"You shall see the order, Mr. Bradford. You will find it all right."

The man went to a small desk nearby and produced a paper which he handed to the big broker, who after carefully scanning it pronounced himself satisfied.

"Now," said Mr. Bradford, "United Traction closed this afternoon at 195 3-8. I will give you 196, ten per cent. down, for which I will hand you my check, and the balance on delivery of the stock at my office at two o'clock to-morrow."

"I will accept your offer," replied Mr. Grindle, after a moment of thought.

"Very good," replied Bradford in a tone of satisfaction, and Sid thought he detected a covert smile of triumph about his lips. "There are 6,000 shares in this block. At 196 that amounts to \$1,176,000."

He took out his checkbook and a stylographic pen.

"There, Mr. Grindle, is my check for \$117,600. Please give me your receipt for that amount on account of the purchase of the 6,000 shares of United Traction in question."

Mr. Grindle wrote out the receipt and handed it to his visitor.

"Thank you, sir. I think that ends our business. Come out with me to the cafe down the street and I will open a bottle."

Mr. Grindle went into an adjoining room, got his hat, and the two men left the room together.

Sid left his hiding place and listened at the door until he heard the hall door slam.

The transaction he had witnessed was perfectly intelligible to Sid.

He knew that the block of United Traction which had now practically passed into the hands of Jim Bradford

and his associates represented the shares Samuel Grigsby had been moving heaven and earth to retain in his interests.

As matters now stood Mr. Grigsby was beaten, and on the morrow he would know it.

"This will be the first time on record that Mr. Grigsby got it in the neck from his opponents, and there will be highjinks in the Bradford camp to-morrow," muttered the boy, regretfully. "Well, I suppose the best of us will get it in the solar plexus at least once in a lifetime."

He turned to leave the room and came face to face with an elderly man in his shirt sleeves, whose face was white and drawn, and whose hands were torn and bleeding.

Sid started back in consternation and the other seemed similarly affected.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GREATEST BOY IN WALL STREET.

For a moment there was an awkward pause. Then the man who had entered the room spoke:

"I suppose you will try to prevent me leaving this house, young man, but as sure as my name is Gregory Grindle, I will make every man concerned in this outrage sweat for it."

"Gregory Grindle!" gasped Sid, in a tone of astonishment. "Why, Mr. Grindle just left this house a moment ago."

His surprise was so palpable, and his manner so pacific at the moment, that the elderly gentleman looked at him fixedly and with no little curiosity.

"Are you not in this plot to detain me a prisoner here?" he asked, with a kind of eagerness in his manner.

"No, sir. I don't know who you are. Nor have I ever seen you before. Neither do I understand why you assert that you are detained as a prisoner in this house."

"Are you not connected with this house?"

"No, sir."

"Then what are you doing here at this hour of the night, and alone?" with some suspicion of the boy's motives.

"I was brought here against my will five nights ago and have been held a close prisoner in a room above ever since. I was trying to avail myself of a chance to make my escape."

"Indeed. You interest me, for I was brought here myself last night under similar circumstances. Who are you, and why have you been treated in this way?"

"A young scoundrel named Oakley Thorne, who is a broker's clerk, is at the bottom of the outrage," replied Sid, answering the second question first. "His object was personal revenge. My name is Sidney Grant."

"Sidney Grant!" repeated the gentleman. "The name sounds familiar to me. Are you connected with Samuel Grigsby?"

"I was his messenger for three years. I am now in business for myself."

"Then I can trust you," said the gentleman, with an air of relief. "What did you mean by saying that Mr. Grindle left the house a little while ago?"

"Because I saw him leave this room with a well-known broker, and heard them both leave the house a moment before you came in here."

"How could that be when I am Mr. Grindle?"

"But the broker addressed him as Gregory Grindle."

"He did, eh? I begin to see that I am the victim of some kind of a plot. What passed between these men? Did you hear all their conversation?"

"I did, and will tell you. But had not we better leave this place while we have the chance? This man who I heard addressed as Grindle, and who seems to be the person who occupies this house, may return at any moment."

The gentleman's eyes at that moment rested on a wall telephone at the other side of the room.

His eyes lit up, and quickly turning he closed the door and locked it.

Then he went to the 'phone, and in answer to Central's reply asked for the night manager.

When the connection was made he requested to be put in communication with the police station nearest to the house.

When this was done he asked that a couple of officers be sent to the house at once.

"Now I will listen to you, young man," he said, as he hung up the receiver.

Sid, now wondering what was going to come of this affair, told all that had taken place at the interview between the presumed Gregory Grindle and Jim Bradford.

"It is all perfectly clear to me now," said the gentleman. "I am Gregory Grindle, lawyer and co-executor of the Matthew Bramble estate. The man you saw is a fraud. Will you describe him to me?"

Sid did so.

"It is as I thought. He is John Grady, my business associate, of whose integrity I have recently had grave doubts. He is familiar with the fight between Samuel Grigsby and the Bradford clique for the control of United Traction. He has got possession of the order I received from the Probate Court to sell the stock belonging to the estate, and his purpose is to sell it by impersonating me for the time being and make off with the proceeds of his villainy. But I will thwart him. Yes, yes; he'll find that Gregory Grindle is not the man to tamely submit to an imposition of this kind."

"Then this sale of the stock to Mr. Bradford is not binding?" asked Sid, eagerly.

"Certainly not. Now, my lad, just look out of the window and watch for the officers. Let me know if John Grady comes back before they arrive."

Two policemen were presently seen approaching the house, and at Mr. Grindle's request Sid went to the hall door and admitted them.

When Grady came back, after an hour's absence, he was thunderstruck to find that the tables were turned on him.

A carriage was procured, and he and the still unconscious Oakley Thorne bundled into it.

The pair were locked up in the station, to be sent to the Tombs next morning.

Sid and Mr. Grindle then separated to go to their homes.

Mrs. Grant and Nellie had been in a state of distraction during the five days of Sid's absence, and they received him almost as one risen from the dead. They listened to the story of his adventure with wonder and indignation.

The first thing Sid saw in the morning papers was that Samuel Grigsby had met with a serious accident by being thrown from his carriage in Central Park.

Sid rushed up to his house, but was told he could not be seen.

From there he went to his office, where his bookkeeper received him almost hilariously, inquiring what had been the cause of his absence.

Sid told him the whole story.

The boy was in his private room when Elsie appeared at ten o'clock.

"Oh, Sid, Sid, dear Sid!" she cried, springing into his arms. "Where have you been? What happened to you? I know it must have been something dreadful to keep you away from us all."

Of course, the young broker had to tell her everything.

An hour later Sid, with a purpose in view, called at the office of Mr. Grindle and found him in.

"Mr. Grindle, I want to buy a thirty-day option on that block of United Traction stock at the market price, which is 195 5-8 this morning. What will you charge me?"

"I don't care to sell such an option, Grant, but I'll tell you what I will do. I'll sell you the stock at 196, if you can manage to raise ten per cent. of the sale price to-day among those interested with Mr. Grigsby in the control of the company."

"I accept your offer, Mr. Grindle; but delay is not necessary. The price of the 6,000 shares at 196 is \$1,176,000. I will give you my personal check for \$117,600, which is ten per cent. of the full price."

This was satisfactory to Mr. Grindle, and fifteen minutes later Sid Grant held evidence that he was the boss of the situation in United Traction.

He and Mr. Grindle went at once to the Tombs Police Court, where they had to appear against John Grady and Oakley Thorne, respectively.

Their arrest and a few details of the charge against them had appeared in the earlier edition of the afternoon papers.

This account had been read by Jim Bradford with astonishment and dismay.

Then he went up to the court to see what more he could learn about the matter.

When the prisoners were remanded for the action of the Grand Jury and Sid was leaving the court with Mr. Grindle, Mr. Bradford stepped up and asked the lawyer if he would recognize the deal he (Bradford) had made

with John Grady under the impression that he was dealing with the real Gregory Grindle.

"I will give you my check now for ten per cent. of the price," said the broker, "the balance to be paid when you deliver the stock at my office this afternoon at two."

"Sorry, sir, but I have sold that stock to this young man, and have received his certified check for ten per cent. of the purchase price. I shall have to refer you to him."

Jim Bradford was staggered, but recovered himself in a moment.

"I want that stock, Grant," he said. "What will you take for your interest in it as it stands?"

"I am not selling it at present, Mr. Bradford," replied Sid, politely.

Nothing more was said then about the stock, but the next day Bradford called on Sid and offered him 197 for the 6,000 shares.

He declined the offer.

This led to a consultation between Bradford and the brokers interested with him in the traction deal.

For the purpose of frightening Sid into coming to terms with them, Bradford and his associates headed a bear attack on United Traction, and gradually forced it down to 178, thereby nearly wiping out the boy's invested interests in the shares he held.

On the morning of the tenth day Bradford decided on bringing the matter to a crisis.

He sent word to Sid that he would call on him at eleven o'clock, and he also sent word to several of the more prominent brokers interested with him in obtaining the control of United Traction to meet him at Sidney Grant's office.

Sid had expected to see Jim Bradford, but the advent of the others were a surprise to him.

Bradford stated that the object of this meeting was to persuade Sid to sell out the traction shares.

"Your ten-day limit is up to-day," he said. "Your hold on the traction market will cease at noon unless you can raise the balance of the money. Samuel Grigsby is out of the fight. Where will you get the \$1,058,400 necessary to take over those shares with the stock down to 178? Already you are out \$108,000 of your \$117,600. Transfer your claim on the stock to us and we will make good your loss."

Sid was clearly driven into a hole.

He had put up almost every dollar he owned to save United Traction for Mr. Grigsby, in the hope that his old employer would be able to respond before it was too late.

But as day by day went by, and Mr. Grigsby showed no hope of improvement, that hope grew less and less, and now at last the end was nearly at hand.

Sid must either sell out to the Bradford clique or go to the wall, and that, too, with the knowledge that the stock would be thrown on the market and Bradford might be able to rake it in after all.

Elsie, who had just brought him in a letter to sign and knew the predicament he was in, felt worried at the sight

of his set countenance, which showed that there was still fight in him, though driven into the last ditch.

At that moment the door opened and a messenger boy entered with a note addressed to Sid.

Mechanically he took it and tore it open.

A note and a check came out in his hand.

He glanced at the signature and his face suddenly lighted up.

"Gentlemen," he said, turning to Bradford and his associates, "I am much obliged for your generous offer to save me from the loss of \$108,000; but I must decline it. This bit of paper answers all my purposes."

"What do you mean?" demanded Mr. Bradford, a bit apprehensively.

"I mean that I am now in the position to pay the balance of the money due Mr. Grindle at noon to-day for that United Traction stock. I hold in my hand Samuel Grigsby's check for \$1,058,400."

The brokers fled the place demoralized.

A month afterward, when Mr. Grigsby was able to resume business, Sid turned the stock over to him, receiving the \$117,600 he had paid on the shares to hold them; his commission of \$1,500 and \$100,000 in grateful appreciation for his loyalty to the Grigsby interests.

Thus, without considering the value of his seat on the Stock Exchange, to which he was duly elected a member, he was worth a quarter of a million in hard cash.

Grigsby circulated throughout Wall Street the news of Sid's heroic stand-out in United Traction in his interest while he lay at death's door at his home during those fateful ten days, and thus it became known that Grigsby's apparent break with his late messenger was all a blind and part of a deep game of the old man to maintain his hold on the traction interests.

Sid in consequence became the most popular young trader in the Street.

Oakley Thorne and John Grady were subsequently tried and convicted and got a long term each in Sing Sing.

In due course of time Sid married Elsie Carter, built a splendid home in Larchmont and joined many aristocratic clubs.

Lately he has acquired the title of the commodore of the yacht club, but the title he is the proudest of, and so is Elsie, is that of "The Greatest Boy in Wall Street."

THE END.

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